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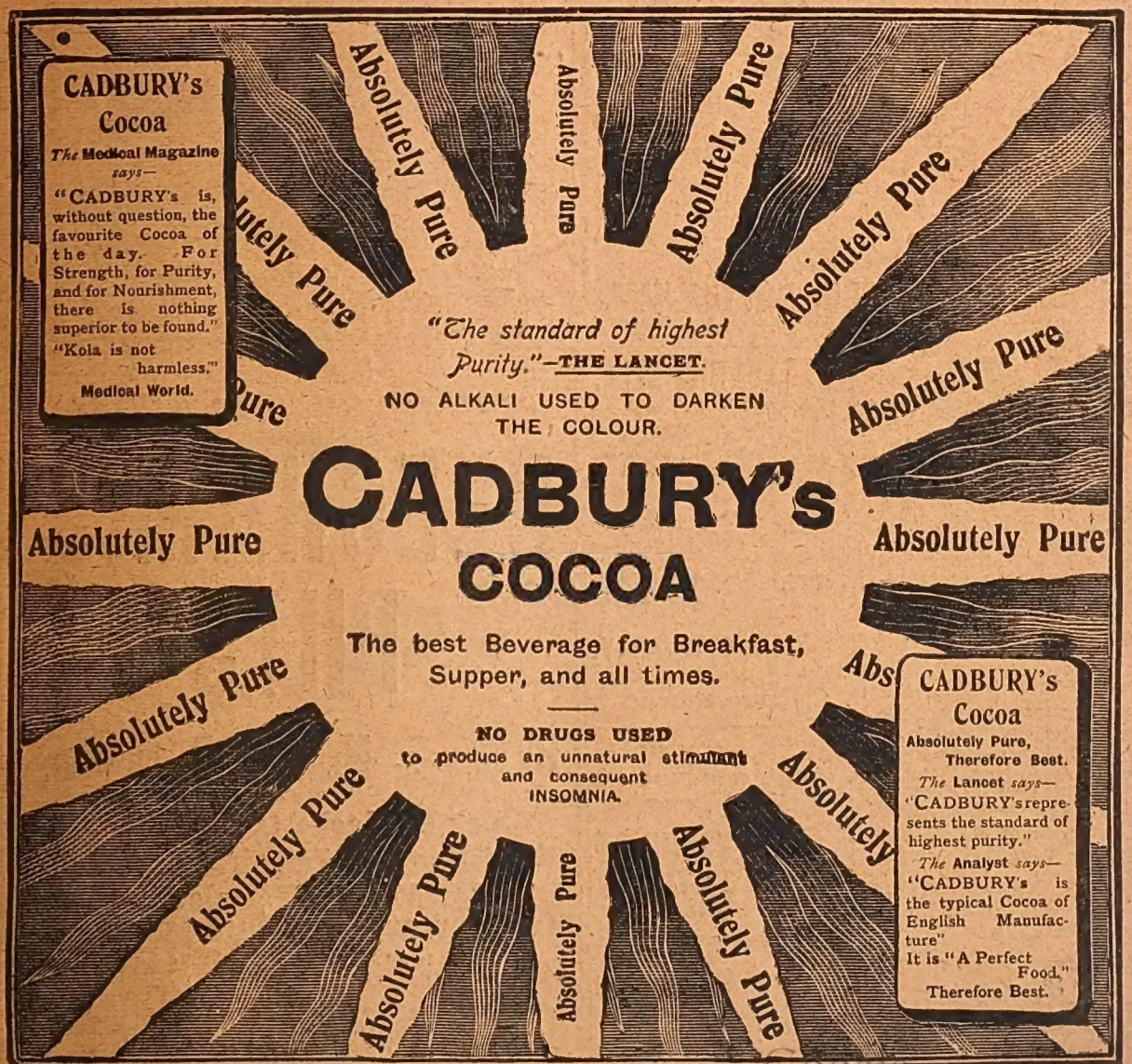
SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

NO. 525. FOR WEEK ENDING JANUARY 21ST, 1899. [ONE PENNY.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SHORT STORIES

No. 525. ONE PENNY.

For the Week ending January 21st, 1899.

CHECKMATE.

"A MAN is an idiot to submit to the lashings of a woman's tongue!"

With this exclamation John Gleddon snatched his hat from the hat-rack, slammed the door behind him, and walked away rapidly down town.

Deprived of the chance for another word, Mrs. Gleddon flew into a passion which it is difficult to describe. She rushed to and fro about the house, with hands outstretched, as if clutching at an imaginary foe (her husband, no doubt), and muttering incoherently. Evidently, the domestic machine was very much out of joint.

At last she was struck with a novel idea. She would pay him out for his cruelty; she would teach him to insult her; she would humble his pride and fill his heart with remorse.

Sitting down at her desk, she penned the dagger which should pierce his soul!

* * * * * *

It was late when Mr. Gleddon returned for dinner. Business had detained him, but it had been profitable and his humour was greatly improved. His wife would be sorry, no doubt, for what had passed, he thought, and perhaps would drop a tear or two as evidence of her penitence. He would be generous and forgive her, and allow her to dry her eyes upon the lapel of his coat. Yes, she should have his unconditional pardon.

However, Mr. Gleddon was doomed to disappointment. No penitent eyes met him at the door.

He stepped into the hall and passed on into the dining-room. She was not there, and no dinner awaited him.

On the table was a note. It read as follows:

JOHN GLEDDON.—In the presence of a whole churchful of people you vowed to love, cherish and protect poor little Gladys. Have you done so? No! you have trampled upon my love! You have crushed me with your tyranny! You should have married that red-headed Jones girl, who would have scratched your face and cracked your skull with a rolling-pin. But I will not upbraid you; your conscience alone shall be your accuser. Believe me, there is no malice in the heart which has borne your persecutions. It may console you, in the lonely years to come, to know that you have my pardon for your perfidy—your inexcusable treachery and neglect. If it is not too much trouble you may come down to the foot of Old Graniteside to-night, and rescue from the cold, heartless waters all that remains of little, broken-hearted,—GLADYS.

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As Mr. Gleddon reached the end of the note, his face paled and his hands shook perceptibly.

"Good Heavens!" he gasped, "does she contemplate suicide?"

He was about to rush from the room, when a second thought flashed across his mind. He picked up the note and perused it again, his countenance changing from fear to anger. Making a roll of the note, he struck a match, lighted the paper, and threw it, blazing, into the grate. He then mounted his bicycle and rode away.

* * * * *

Two ladies were sitting in the shade, partially concealed by a thick growth of shrubs and trees which crowned the brow of Old Graniteside. They were enjoying the exhilarating breezes and chatting rapidly.

They were Mrs. Gleddon and her friend Miss Fannie Wagner.

"Isn't it strange that he doesn't come, Fan?" asked Mrs. Gleddon, glancing anxiously in the direction of the town.

"Perhaps he is going to bring a body of men, with drags and an ambulance," replied her companion laughing,

"No doubt; but even then he or they ought to be here before this time. John will not leave my body in the water longer than necessary," said Mrs. Gleddon, shuddering in imagination of such an unpleasant condition.

"What a mean thing you are, Gladys, to frighten him so! He will be nearly distracted."

"Well, I don't care much if he is. It will teach him to treat me with more regard in the future."

"On the contrary, he may never forgive you for treating him so shabbily."

"Oh, no! He will think that I really and truly meant to jump into the water; but that I met you and was persuaded otherwise. It will be easy enough to deceive him. 'Love is blind,' you know. Ha! ha!"

"Then you believe he loves you?" asked Fannie.

"Why, of course, he does; he adores me! That's what ails him. He is so jealous of me that he wishes me to be always petting him, for fear my love will wane. If he loved me less he would not be so peevish."

"And you?"

"Oh, certainly, I like him fairly well. But then, you know, a woman should not be so lavish with her affections; she must be master of herself and her temper. It is the man who is continually betraying himself by his actions, and making a stupid of himself."

"Then you think a woman should not allow her love to manifest itself?"

"Hardly ever. It is always best for a woman to guard her passions and emotions, for once let her take the initiative and sue for favours, and that moment she makes herself a slave to his tyranny."

"Would you have the wife sacrifice her husband's pride?"

"Yes; rather than her own."

* * * * *

At that moment, Mr. Gleddon, tired of eavesdropping and stung by the foregoing conversation, mounted his bicycle and rode away, taking good care that his course should be out of sight of the ladies.

A half-hour later, Mrs. Gleddon despairing of her husband's coming and almost hoping that he had in some manner missed seeing her note, arose and, with her companion, was soon cycling homewards. They had made about half the distance to the town, when they came to a deep hollow of considerable width, and spanned by a rustic bridge.

"What a picturesque scene this is, Fan!" exclaimed Mrs. Gleddon as their machines were gliding over the bridge.

"Yes, it is! But look, Gladys! There is a man down there! Who can it be? What has happened to him?"

Glancing in the direction designated by her friend, Mrs. Gleddon saw a man lying at the bottom of the ravine on a patch of green-ward, with his face turned upwards. Not far from him lay his machine.

"Heavens!" she exclaimed, "it's John! He has ridden off the approach to the bridge and is killed!"

The ladies dismounted from their machines and Mrs. Gleddon, in her excitement, made a movement as if she contemplated following the course taken by her husband, but was restrained by the hand of Miss Wagner.

"Compose yourself, Gladys," she said. "Would you jump to certain death? Perhaps he is not killed after all."

"I tell you he is dead! Look at his white face!" exclaimed the frightened woman. "Come, Fan, let us go to him!"

In a few moments Mrs. Gleddon was kneeling beside the still form of her husband, with her hands placed over his heart.

"He is not dead, but only stunned. Bring some water, Fan! Quick! please!"

Miss Wagner hurriedly soaked her handkerchief in the stream close by, and placed it on the man's forehead. Then they both set to work rubbing his hands, face and chest, while Mrs. Gleddon forgetting her pride and self-restraint, gave vent to her excitement in tears and sobs.

"Oh, my poor hubby! You did come to save me and have lost your own life, perhaps, in the undertaking! See! Fan! How still he lies! Oh, he will never come to, and I have murdered him!"

But Miss Wagner was busily applying the water, and paid little heed to what her companion said.

At last there was a slight jerking of the muscles and something like a moan escaped the man's lips.

"He is coming to, Fan! More water!" exclaimed the excited wife, bending over and pressing her lips to those of her husband.

Another supply of water drenched his head. He sprang to his feet, snatched a handkerchief from his pocket and began mopping the water from his face and neck.

"What on earth are you two simpletons doing with me?" he asked, half in anger.

"Oh, John! are you badly hurt?" asked his wife, with much anxiety.

"Hurt? Well, I should think not!"

"But you know, you rode off the approach, and——"

"Don't you believe it! Just came down here to enjoy a nap in the cool shade, and was pounding away amazingly when you came and woke me up in such a heathenish manner."

"But, I don't understand—the note—didn't you come to the rescue——"

"Indeed not!" said he. "You see, I thought a bath in the cold, heartless water would be just the thing to cool your temper, and——"

But Mrs. Gleddon waited to hear no more.

"You mean thing! Come, Fan," she said.

And away they sped, leaving Mr. Gleddon to follow at his leisure.

GUY LESLIE.

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A NOCTURNAL DRAMA.

As I had expected, the back door was unfastened. I have found that I can nearly always rely upon the inherent carelessness of people for such favours as an unlocked door or an open window.

Pushing open the door I soon gained the hall on the ground floor; I had brought no lantern with me, since I did not anticipate requiring the services of one. Three days previously I had, while ostensibly reading the gas meter, familiarised myself with the plans of the house; and had departed, openly making memoranda in a note-book, presumably as to the amount of gas consumed during the last quarter.

The lights in the lower part of the house were out, except one, and the servants were no doubt in bed. A swinging door, containing a pane of glass set in at a level with my shoulder, opened into the front hall. Through it I saw that the lamp near the door was burning dimly; a precautionary measure, evidently, since I was well aware that all the family were in their rooms.

The occupants of the house were but six in number, and consisted of the master, Mr. Joseph Lodge, a wealthy and liberal manufacturer, his wife, a charming woman, so report had it, whom I had not had the pleasure of meeting, and the servants. Of the latter there were but four, a cook, two maids, and a youth of twenty-two, who looked after the one horse belonging to the family, and had various other duties.

From the vantage of a large shrub, only a few yards from the hall door, I had seen the master and his wife return in the carriage at eleven, alight, and enter the house. Later, I had seen the lights in the two front rooms of the second storey, and later still, at about twelve, I had seen the lights go out. I had kept my post until a quarter to one, and as up to that time no one had left the building by either the front or side doors, I felt very certain of finding Mr. and Mrs. Lodge in their rooms, but whether asleep or awake remained to be determined.

Gentlemen of my profession have a natural antipathy to light while following their vocation, so, with a glance of suspicious enmity at the low-burning gas-jet, I started up the broad staircase, stooping low and steadying myself with my hands on the steps above. At the sixth step I paused and listened attentively. I heard no sound save the loud ticking of a clock close by, and the howl of a dog at a distance. Well content, I started forward again, when — a quick, shrill shriek sent my heart leaping into my throat, and caused me to catch the banisters in fear and trembling.

My first thought was of a burglar alarm; then my nerves quieted down and I realised the meaning of the sound; it was a cuckoo clock hanging on the landing above me. It had struck one o'clock.

With my nerves somewhat unsettled, I crept on again past the clock, and so reached the head of the stairs in the second floor.

All was darkness. To the right of me another flight of stairs led on up to the third storey, where in front of the house was situated a billiard-room, and in the back a garret. With these rooms I had nothing to do, so I turned my attention to Mrs. Lodge's room. From this no light shone anywhere, neither through the key-hole nor from under the door. I stooped and laid a practised ear at the key-hole; not a sound reached it.

I turned to the door opposite. Here, as there, shone no sign of light, but I heard distinctly from within the sound of subdued snoring. I tried the handle. Eureka! I was in luck; the door opened.

Pushing it gently, I crept through and closed it again, all but a few inches.

Crossing the room, with a glance at the bed and its inmate, I reached the window on the side of the house, and undoing the fastening, raised the sash a few inches to make sure that egress, in case of hurried flight, was possible there. A pipe would enable me to reach the balcony, and from that escape was easy.

Heavy curtains draped the window at each side. Behind one of these I stepped and looked out.

Below me were the grounds, beyond that the road, with a few scattered residences in sight. The night was cloudy, but not perfectly dark. There was prospect of moonlight later on, for even now the moon was struggling with the black clouds overhead.

I stepped into the room again.

The bed, with its sleeping occupant, was plainly discernable, a great blotch of grey in the half light. I could see no sign of a cupboard or wardrobe in the room, but a door near at hand opened into a dressing-room where, since it was lighted by a window on the side of

the house, I could plainly make out the forms of a wash-stand, a chair or two, and what, on investigation, proved to be a cupboard door.

I had reason to believe that under the foot of the bed I should find a basket containing the table silver of the house, and on running my hand along the floor thereabouts, I was not disappointed. The basket appeared to be nearly full of knives, forks, and such like utensils. But I left it in its place for the present, as I wished first to examine Mrs. Lodge's jewellery case, which I had been informed contained some few diamonds really meriting the attention of such an experienced collector as myself.

The ticking of a watch attracted my attention, and I soon located it on the wash-stand in the dressing-room. From the feeling of it, it appeared to be an ordinary gold watch, with some inscription on the back, and so, perhaps scarcely worth the trouble of disposing of it. Still, business had not been particularly flourishing with me of late, so I dropped the watch into my pocket, resolving not to be too nice in my tastes.

At that moment a slight sound fell on my ears. I paused and waited, but heard nothing more. Then I looked carefully round the corner of the door-post. I could see nothing to account for the noise. The sleeper lay in the same position and snored quietly. I advanced into the room, keeping well in the shadow. Everything was as before. Stay! Surely, there lay a faint line of light under the door across the hall.

I stole to the door of the room, and increased its opening sufficiently to allow my eyes a fair view of the one opposite. There was a light in the woman's room which had not been there when I looked before. It was not strong, and I surmised that she had lighted a night-lamp which would also account for the small noise I had heard. Hesitating whether to remain where I was or to retreat to the convenient darkness of the stairs, I listened for sounds from the room. Presently they reached me—the sounds of footsteps! And coming towards the door.

Even as I drew myself together for a retreat, the light under the door increased in brilliancy, and then suddenly the door was opened and I caught a glimpse, ere I abandoned my position, of a woman in a light coloured gown, holding a night lamp in one hand.

Quickly and noiselessly I stepped behind one of the draperies of Mr. Lodge's window. I preferred to be there rather than in the dressing-room, in case of discovery, since in the latter place I should be cut off from retreat save by way of the window, which I had neglected to examine.

Scarcely had I gained my hiding place when the door of the room was opened, the woman entered, and the door was closed again and locked. I inwardly abused her for a meddling fool, while observing with relief that she had left the key in the lock. She passed where I stood, and I was obliged to draw back and so lost sight of her for a moment.

When I looked again she was at the side window. Putting aside the draperies she raised the lower sash to its full limit. That was the one I partly opened. I thanked her fervently for that; I had preferred, when hurried, a window to a door, and with this one wide open, I could leap to the balcony, if necessary.

She stood looking out for nearly a minute; then she turned and came back to the foot of the bed opposite to where I stood concealed, and I held my breath lest she should hear the sound of my breathing.

Once she started towards me, possibly to put up that window also, but changing her mind, went to the bed and examined the sleeping man, holding the lamp over his face.

His low, regular respiration seemed to satisfy her, for I heard a sigh of evident relief as she placed the lamp on a chair and let her gaze travel about the room.

As she stood there, I found my first good opportunity for observing her. She appeared to be about thirty years of age, tall, erect and with a superb carriage of the head. Her gown revealed in it clinging folds a perfect form. Her hair, black and lustrous, hung unconfined over her broad white shoulder, and her face—but as I looked at her face my heart stopped its beating for an instant.

She was undeniably handsome, with regular features and deep-set, dark eyes, but on her face was such a terrible, inhuman look of repressed agony and dread, that for the moment I thought her insane. Her next actions were but little conducive to a change of opinion.

With a shrug of her shoulders, as though throwing off some qualm of an opposing conscience, she crossed the apartment to the side window, and pulling softly at one of the draperies, soon tore it from its fastenings. This she laid on a chair. Then she took from the pocket of her gown a tiny phial and a cloth. Again she approached the sleeping man and bent over him; he stirred uneasily in his slumber, and I saw her hand cross to her bosom and linger there until he breathed quietly again.

For a time my nerves had played me false, but when I realised that murder was to be done, unless I speedily thought of a way of preventing it, my ordinary composure returned, and I set my mind busily to work.

Quickly but carefully, she applied a portion of the contents of the phial to the cloth and laid it over the sleeper's face; in a moment the sweet, nauseous fumes of chloroform filled the room. The threatened man stirred not. Laying down the phial, after replacing the stopper, the woman seized the drapery from the chair and tore off about a yard of its length. Again she approached the bed; turning down the bed clothes and undoing his night-shirt, she laid her hand over the man's heart.

Already I could perceive a difference in his breathing; the drug was taking effect. I have had some experience with chloroform, and I knew that the quantity already administered would produce no worse effect than a severe headache on waking. But the drug, I was sure, was but the first step; the real drama was yet to be played.

The woman's hand travelled slowly over the bared breast; the other hand went to her bosom; this one I watched. In a moment the hand at her bosom fell to her side. It was her left hand and I could not see it. She bent silently over the bed and listened intently. The house was still. I held my breath; my mind was already made up, and I only awaited the moment to act. Already her hands drew together, when again that clock on the landing below shrieked out the hour! I started violently and the curtain folds undulated. I feared to look out lest she had seen it. Again the clock shrieked. Two o'clock.

I gathered my nerves in hand and peered out. The woman was on the floor; the hand clutching at her heart held a small jewelled dagger; plainly could I hear her laboured breathing; she, too, had been startled by the sounds. For a moment or two she sat there motionless, leaning against the foot of the bed. Then she arose. The dagger was clutched in her right hand now; with the left she sought the opening between the ribs over the heart of the unconscious victim.

She raised the knife; three blood-red gems in the hilt sparkled wickedly in the light. Slowly she lowered it until the point touched the man's breast over his heart. Again and carefully she raised the dagger.

Her back was towards me and I could not see her face, for which I was rather thankful; it could not have been, just at that moment, a pleasant one to look upon. The upraised hand never trembled as it was poised to strike. I thrust the drapery noiselessly aside and stole forward, just as a loud hiss burst from her lips and the knife swiftly descended.

But I had thrust my right arm forward, and as hers struck it the dagger dropped harmlessly from her hand and fell flat on the man's naked breast.

She uttered no sound, but while I might have counted ten, stood erect and rigid. Such moments as those kill, and I, in turn, heaved a sigh of relief when she fell quietly back against me in a swoon.

I half dragged and half carried her to the nearest chair, where she lay inert and lifeless, while I went back to the bed and examined the saturated cloth over the man's face.

As I had thought, the amount of chloroform inhaled was too small to do more than produce profound slumber, so I replaced the cloth lest the sleeper should throw off the effect and wake before my visit was over. The dagger I picked up and examined. It was of foreign workmanship. Six large rubies adorned the hilt, and despite the fact that the thing was intended to serve only as an ornament, the steel was of such quality that I could not bend the blade from its shape. Had it struck a rib, the man's life would not have been spared through the intervention of a bent blade. It was a pretty thing, and I dropped it into a pocket after the watch.

Then I unlocked the door and peered out, listening carefully for sounds of persons moving in the house. All was silent. Our little drama had passed off unheard.

I closed and locked the door again, and seated myself on the edge of the bed facing the unconscious woman, and filled my pipe and lighted it. The odour of the chloroform was still sickening, although the opened window had done much to dissipate it. For several minutes I sat there and thought, watching the smoke clouds float upwards, and keeping an eye on my fair neighbour. Then I went to the window and knocking the ashes out against the sill, placed my pipe back in my pocket, and drew a chair to the small table which stood against the wall.

I had a pencil in my pocket, but I preferred to use a fly leaf from a book lying at my elbow, than to tear a page from the little memorandum book which I carried.

Take a burglar's advice; never sleep again with your door unlocked; danger threatens from within.

I folded the message, and searching under the clothes, folded it firmly in the sleeper's hand. Then I turned again to the woman. A faint colour had returned to her cheeks and an instant later her eyes opened and fell on me.

She gazed at me in silence; then her glance wandered to the bed and its occupant, and she looked long at the latter. His breathing had grown less laboured now. Her gaze travelled back to me, where I sat on the bottom of the bed.

"You—saved him?" she asked quietly. I nodded my head.

"Why?" The question rather staggered me, and I hesitated.

"Why?" she repeated. "What is he to you that you should have interfered? I would have paid you well. I would have given you all that you could have asked; half his fortune would be little enough to pay for his death! He is rich, far richer than even I know of; but I do not want his money."

She started from her seat and fell on her knees before me, her arms held out to me in supplication.

"See, there is yet time!" she whispered hoarsely. "The knife! Where is it? What have you done with it?" Her eyes searched rapidly the bed, the floor, my hands. "Kill him! I will make you rich—rich—rich!"

She sank to the floor in exhaustion and looked into my face beseechingly. I shook my head, and I suppose something of the horror I felt found its way to my countenance. She rose unsteadily to her feet.

"You coward! You fool!" she hissed. "What is his life among so many? Are there not thousands of fiends left in the world? Let this one die! Where is the knife? Give it to me!"

Again I shook my head. She dropped her hands and went back to her chair and sank into it wearily, with a look of hopeless misery on her face. When she spoke again she was calmer.

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"Who are you?" she asked.

"My name matters little," I replied; "call me the Hand of Providence."

She took no notice.

"You are a burglar?"

"I have that honour," I said.

"You came for——"

"Your jewels."

"They are in my room; in the second drawer; all save these."

She held out a hand, on the fingers of which blazed three diamonds of immense size and beauty. I looked at them with interest. The sleeve of her loose gown was drawn back from the outstretched wrist, and my gaze fell on something that startled me more than the stones; a white, firm arm, carrying a wheal an inch wide, and purple as though marked with ink.

"What is that?" I asked.

For answer she drew her sleeve further up her arm. Two other similar marks discoloured the fair surface. I looked from them to her face, doubting the evidence of my senses.

"They are nothing," she said, her lips curling with scorn, "only marks of affection from my husband." I shuddered and glanced at the quiet figure on the bed. "They are the least of all; look!"

She tore the gown away from her shoulder. Purple and blue and yellow marks crossed and recrossed there.

"A whip?" I asked.

"A cane," she answered.

"Why?"

"Because it is his pleasure."

"But why do you not get a separation? Surely——"

"He is a devil incarnate. No one knows, not even the servants; he is so careful." She laughed mirthlessly. "Our friends, acquaintances, everyone, think us a model couple. Neglected wives hereabouts hold that fiend up to their husbands' gaze as an example of marital perfection. For months I have laboured to provoke him to strike me before the servants. But no; he is only 'grieved at my conduct.' Once when I expected blows I hid my maid in the cupboard of my room. When he came in he went straight to the door and sent her away; and then I—suffered."

We sat in silence for a moment. I thought of nothing to say, for my blood was hot within me. The clock on the stairs shrieked thrice.

She arose.

"I must go back," she said. "Will you come and take the jewels? They are nothing to me!" I shook my head.

"No," I answered roughly.

I was thankful when she arose and her sleeve fell over those marks; the dagger burnt in my pocket and my fingers itched to have it out; and were it in my hand and those cruel stripes before my eyes, I think, nay, I know for truth, that in another moment I should have buried the knife where it belonged.

"One minute, please."

I arose.

"These things must be put away."

I took up the phial, still half full of chloroform, and hurled it far out of the window.

"A burglar does not leave such things about."

I picked up the torn drapery.

"I suppose you would have bound your hands with this?"

She nodded.

"And gagged yourself with this?"

Again she nodded.

"And how could you have tied your own hands?"

She shrugged her shoulders.

"I should have done the best I could. In the excitement of the morning no one would have noticed whether the knot was tight or loose."

"I don't believe they would." I laid down the curtain again. The smaller pieces I folded and put in my pocket. I moved the chairs out of their places.

"That is all I think."

She moved to the door. I took the dagger from my pocket.

"And this?" I asked, holding it out to her.

"Keep it," she said. "The stones are of value."

"I will keep it," I answered, "but not for the stones."

I unlocked the door and held it open for her. With lamp in hand, she paused on the threshold.

"Are you proud of what you have done?" she asked wearily.

"No!" I answered under my breath. "I am sorry."

A softer look crept into her face.

"No, do not be. For a while longer my soul is without crime. For that I should thank you."

Impulsively she stretched her hand to me. The sleeve fell away from her wrist. Something came before my eyes like a dim red veil. Dropping to my knees, I pushed back her sleeve and pressed a mad kiss on her arm over one disfiguring wheal.

Then I staggered to my feet and stood before her with lowered eyes, muttering: "Forgive me—forgive me!" over and over again.

She made no answer, and presently I gathered courage to lift my eyes, expecting to find her gone. Instead, my gaze fell on her face, whereon I saw no sign of anger, only a troubled smile, and I think—a faint flush in her cheeks.

"It was nothing," she said simply. "It is only that you are sorry for a woman, and"—a sob crept into her voice—"I am not used to it."

I made no reply. She went out and across the landing and in at her door, and when it had closed upon her I was left in darkness.

For some time I stood there motionless. Perhaps it was a minute—perhaps an hour—I do not know. Then I shook myself together and closed the door and locked it. From the man's face I took away the cloth and put it in my pocket.

Then I remembered his watch, which ticked away in the folds of my coat, and I took it out and threw it on the bed by him. At the window I paused and looked out as I had done nearly two hours before. To the left of the house the sky was growing pink with the first pearly light of the new day.

With one foot on the sill, I hesitated, and then went back into the room.

When again I was ready to depart, I stood outside on the ledge and drew down the window after me. Then I dropped to the balcony and thence to the ground safely, and without noise, and hurried away over the silent road.

And as I went I tossed some bits of torn paper to the roadside.

L. P. HARNEY.

BARBER: "You are getting quite bald, sir. Can't I recommend something for your head?"

Mr. Hurry: "Why, yes; I'd like my hat as soon as possible!"

BOOK II.—CONCERNING THE - - VOYAGE IN THE SOUTH SEAS.

SUMMARY.

A MAJOR and a cornet of Sheridan's Horse seek refuge in the wilds of Lochaber after the battle of Culloden Moor. They are joined by another refugee, Murtagh O'Neill. The major succumbs to wounds received in the engagement, and a troop of heavy cavalry discover the hiding place of the remaining two fugitives, and give chase to them.

They manage to get away safely and reach St. Peter's Strait, where they discover a trading cutter standing apparently empty They take possession and make off with their prize before the owner's return. A boy appears out of the forepeak and volunteers to act as pilot, and they decide on a cruise to France.

The cutter is run down in a fog by a British privateer, giving the fugitives only just time to escape on to the larger vessel as their own goes to the bottom.

The Governor of Lima observes a strange craft cruising in his waters, and orders it to take its departure. The crew defy him, however, and he sends the *Santa Theresa* to punish them for their impudence. Unfortunately for him his own men get the worst of it, and Sneyd, attended by Sandy Carmichael, lands and interviews the Governor, demanding an enormous sum as compensation money. This His Excellency reluctantly agrees to pay.

CHAPTER II.

How the snow Fortune's Favourite *of Bristol, proved to be laden with more firearms than a simple trader generally carries: how she cruised on the Spanish Main: and how she manned and dispatched a prize in search of fresh adventure and reward.*

To retrace our steps a little.

It will be remembered that when the little Scotch cutter was run down off the mouth of the Bristol Channel, her crew scrambled on board the vessel that did the mischief, without so much as wetting themselves. It was a touch-and-go case, certainly; but such things are little thought of at sea, provided they turn out prosperously.

The three found themselves on the forecastle of a snow of some three hundred and fifty tons, possessing exactly the weather-stained clothes they stood up in, and, of worldly goods, absolutely nothing besides.

The chief mate of the snow, a squat, grizzled old seaman with a great birth-mark running across his forehead, over the lid of his left eye, and ending abruptly in mid-cheek, accosted them.

"Umph! got aboard safe, 'ave yer? Sarve yer bloomin' well right to bin drownded. Oughter kep' a smarter look-hout, an' showed a flare when ye saw us a-comin'."

"How could his honour see yez?" retorted O'Neill. "The night's as black as the pit, an' as thick as hedge wid dhrivin' rain. If the lubber that's steerin' had shifted his hellum when his honour sung out, you'd a slipped by under our starn aisy enough."

"The chap as was steerin' did bear away all 'e know'd,' grunted the mate, "but she don't answer as easy as hall that. Guess it's nobody's fault. Might 'a' run foul o' hanybody or hanything that's 'andy, night like this. But give us that glim"—a sailor standing by handed him a horn-windowed lanthorn—"and let's see yer. Oo's this ye're callin' ''is honour'? Strike me, but we've got a bloomin' swell aboard!"

He gazed at the tarnished lace on Sneyd's much soiled uniform, with an odd mixture of surprise and annoyance.

"Are you a King's officer, squire?" he asked.

"That depends which king you are talking about," Sneyd answered.

"Don't split hairs now. Are you are a officer of King George, or are you not."

"Emphatically I am not."

"Then what in thunder are you?" asked the fellow, bringing forward the lanthorn again, and looking him up and down afresh.

"One of King James's officers. I was in Prince Charles's army."

"Whew!" whistled the mate; "that's not so bad. I thought you was one o' the hother sort."

"And if I had been?" inquired Sneyd.

"Well, you'd a' found yerself in the wrong shop, that's all."

"I wish," said Sneyd, testily, "you wouldn't be so mysterious. Tell us what the ship is, can't you, and where she's bound to. I've been open enough with you."

"You're aboard the snow *Forchun's Favooryte*, port o' Bristol, Reuben Grum, master, bound for the West Injies, an' per'aps on a bit along the Main—tradin'. That's enough for you. Now tumble down below and turn in. The skipper 'e takes the mawnin' watch, an' 'e'll see ye then. 'E won't want to be disturbed before."

A seaman led them into the forecastle. A single slush lamp swinging from a blackened beam threw out a dull, smoking, reeking flame, which served to do little more than accentuate the darkness beyond its immediate neighbourhood. The air was close and heavy; and there was a mingled odour of bilge-water, oilskins, unfragrant humanity, and newly-greased sea-boots, that would have been very trying to any but a well-hardened stomach; and what with the hammering of the seas without, the snores of many sleepers, and the rattling and sliding about of one thing and another, there was din sufficient to make ordinary conversation inaudible.

It was not a tempting bedroom, thought Sneyd, but not being in a position to find fault, wisely held his tongue, and climbing into the narrow box of a bunk that was assigned

"Strike me, but we've got a bloomin' swell aboard!"

him, pulled the coarse rug he found there up to his chin, and quickly fell asleep.

It was day when he woke, and the forecastle was illuminated with a dusky sort of twilight, that eyes accustomed to the darkness were able to see in with tolerable facility. Several hammocks were still freighted with human occupants, and many of the bunks at the vessel's side were still tenanted. There must have been the best part of sixty men there. And yet this would represent less than half of the crew. The other watch was on deck, and of course there would be a tidy sprinkling of officers aft. Sneyd was tolerably unversed in such matters, but it struck him that the crew was a remarkably heavy one for a vessel of the size; and he began to wonder how a simple trader could find occupation for so many men, when a summons to go aft and be interviewed by the captain, cut short his ruminations.

Accompanied by O'Neill and the boy, Sneyd passed along the waist, where the men were busily employed in scrubbing down decks, and mounted the poop, which was gained by means of ladders leading up from the waist.

Sneyd had pictured to himself the captain of the *Fortune's Favourite* as something like her chief mate, whom he had met over night, and was somewhat agreeably surprised to find himself mistaken. The commander was a short, slight, nattily-dressed little man in silk stockings, knee-breeches, white kerseymere waistcoat, cut-away coat and gold-laced cocked hat.

He wore diamond buckles on his shoes, and point-lace ruffles showing from out the sleeves of his coat. In fact he was quite a nautical dandy. Sneyd learnt afterwards that "Reuben Grum" was merely the little man's *nom de guerre*—a "purser's name," as it is termed at sea. A cadet of a good English family, he had, as many young men of small fortune did in those days, adopted the sea as a profession; which was to them what Australia was to their descendants a century later.

It meant hard work and rough associates. It might produce nothing more than an arduous livelihood. There were countless contingencies of battle, murder, and sudden death. But to the lucky few, the sea gave ample fortune; and this tempted the ambitious many to try their luck on its hazardous bosom.

"We ran your craft down last night, my men," said Captain Grum, "and I'm sorry for it. The night was thick, and on making strict inquiries, I don't find that my lookout men were to be blamed. It was the fortune of sea, which no one can alter. Now, about your future. I cannot put you ashore, and, from a hint that has come to my ears, I should judge that you would not wish to be landed either in England or Ireland. So you must stay aboard. But as I do not carry passengers, and can allow no idlers on this ship, your names will be entered amongst the crew. I do not know your past experience, but, to concede the benefit of the doubt, you Sneyd, and you O'Neill, will be rated as able seaman, and will receive pay and prize-money as such. Carmichael, you will be entered on the books as boy. You will help the doctor, who tells me that the lad he has at present is a fool. I should tell you that this vessel carries a 'letter of marque,' and you two, Sneyd and O'Neill, will have to drill with pike, cutlass, small arms, and great guns, along with the other men.

"One word more. My list of officers is complete at present, but before the voyage ends it is very likely that there will be casualties. I promote from my own crew; remember this.

"O'Neill, go forward; Carmichael, go to the doctor's

cabin; and the pair of you set about your duty.—Mr. Sneyd, you have come in through the hawse-holes. So did I, and I am on my own quarter-deck now. I trust I may be able some day to bring you up the poop-ladder. But that depends entirely upon yourself. I make no distinction amongst my men, gentle or simple, save such as they carve out for themselves. You are in the second mate's watch. Go and report yourself to him as ready for duty."

Captain Grum was a martinet, strict with his men, and unbending with his officers. But though he was undoubtedly severe, and visited any dereliction of duty with heavy-handed severity, he was undeniably just, and so his discipline on the whole was not unliked. Our trio philosophically determined to endure a fate which they had no option of altering; and not perhaps on the whole dissatisfied with their chances, settled themselves down steadily and soberly to work.

Sandy Carmichael, whose nationality was unknown even to himself, found himself loblolly-boy to a Scotch surgeon. Dr. Menteith took a fancy to him, first from his name, and then for himself. The bottles and jars of drugs in the cramped little dispensary had each its name written on to a piece of paper which was tied on to the neck, and by studying these Sandy taught himself to read. His letters he knew—they had been instilled into him by some instructor in the forgotten past—and in a week he could tell the name of every drug in the place at a glance. The doctor noted this, and finding him a sharp, handy, useful lad all round, gave him regular instruction for half-an-hour every day. Sandy profited by this to the full, and employed his leisure time in reading and re-reading the doctor's slender library. There was little medical knowledge in those days; but Menteith was quite up to his date, and took a pride in imparting all he knew.

He was quite a nautical dandy.

"Ye'll have a chance o' lairning yer anatomy, Sandy lad, before many days are over," he would say, as he was explaining the use of one or other of his instruments. "A cannon-shot is a rare tool for cutting sections with." At which gruesome suggestion Sandy would nod solemnly and go on with mixing his powder, or rolling up pills, or whatever he was engaged upon. "Ye're just the stolid, steady-fisted, wooden-faced sort o' chap to make a successful operator out of," Menteith would continue, "an' wi' good luck ye should be full-blown ship's doctor after this cruise is done. And mind ye, a ship's a graund school for a young fellow to practice in. There's no second opeenion to call in an' say your treatment's erroneous. Ye're lord an' master o' all the sick and wounded. An' when ye're five-an'-thairty ye may go ashore, powder yer queue, marry, and set up as a respectable general practeetioner."

To which vision of comfort and prosperity, Sandy Carmichael steadily looked forward, and strove earnestly to attain.

Of his companions, the Irishman soon established himself as a general favourite throughout the ship. He knew how to do the work that was required of him, and did it well and when off duty he could sing a good song, and dance jig or hornpipe with anybody.

Sneyd at first was looked rather askance at. The rough fellows who were his shipmates saw that he was their superior by birth from the first glance, and for a while distrusted him accordingly, "We don't want no quarter-deck swells down here," growled one. "The snow's got a full complement o' them, aft." But when they saw that Sneyd gave himself no airs, that he neither pressed into their society nor appeared to disdain it, but spent his leisure hours for the most part in trying to improve himself in a sailor's duties, then they changed their opinion of him, and endeavoured to atone for the first cold suspicion, by aiding and instructing him by every means in their power.

The surly first mate, too—he of the dark red blotch on the face—gruffly volunteered one day to show him how to "take the sun" with a quadrant. "You don't seem as big a thick-'ead as some," that squat little officer informed him, "so you can try yer hand with the 'quadran' if yer like, an' then see me cypher out the reck'nin' on the slate after. There, don't answer me, but come along and watch."

Nautical instruments were crude in those days, and experience as well as calculation was necessary to tell a ship's whereabouts on the trackless ocean. But the voyage across the Atlantic was a long and tedious one, and before they had made their first landfall, Sneyd, who proved himself an apt scholar, had mastered the working of log-line, compass, and quadrant; knew how to set a course from the chart; and understood how to deal with that delicate instrument, the chronometer.

A sound education stood him in good stead, and in the time it would have taken an unlettered man to master the very first rudiments of the art, he had become a very average navigator.

* * * * *

One day, when they were some two hundred and fifty miles west of Cape Clear, Sneyd was sitting on the lofty forecastle-deck, rope and marlinespike in hand, receiving instructions from O'Neill in the method of manufacturing that nautical mystery known as a Turk's head.

The snow had met with dead head winds during the last week, and was ratching industriously north and south, but making very little headway against them. Those old barrel-shaped craft, with their towering poops and forecastles, with their square bows, and still squarer sterns, with their bellying square sails and general clumsiness, could make very little progress without a wind that was more or less fair. Given the breeze well aft of the quarter, they would surge and wallow along their four or five, or even six knots the hour, but when the breezes headed them, they were philosophically content with not losing ground. Gain it, of course, they didn't, for leeway always counteracted the little they did of eating up to windward. Scurvy would very

likely break out—in fact, it would be very odd if it didn't—but then they expected it. Salt victuals and a long voyage were sure seeds to grow it from. But then, as I say, if it did come, no one would be particularly surprised or alarmed. Men shipped in those days with a foreknowledge of what was before them, just as they do now.

As I have said, Sneyd and O'Neill were sitting on the forecastle-head, the one learning, and the other teaching, the mysteries of a certain knot, which appears, amongst other places, on the foot-ropes beneath the yards.

"Murtagh O'Neill," Sneyd was saying, marking his periods with the marlinspike, "for the fortieth time, I tell you I've dropped the gentleman."

"An' I say yer honour couldn't dhrop it any more than yez could yer head."

"I have dropped it, I tell you. We are both sailors before the mast, and equals——"

"Aquals! Hear him!" cried the Irishman, in tones of fine scorn.

"Well, if there is any difference, it's you who are the superior. Aren't you teaching me now? But anyway I must ask you to call me Sneyd—simply. It only brings me into bad odour with everyone on board, if you persist in using the handle. The men think I want to hold my nose up in the air, and the officers don't like it either."

"Well, your honour——" said O'Neill, scratching his head.

"You are obstinate."

"As a pig being dhruv to Enniskillen fair," replied the Irishman, with a grin. "But what I was goin' for to say's this: that fornenst the other bhoys I'll do as yez bid me, but when we'se alone, I shall just take leave to do as I plaze."

"That's a bargain, now; so remember. There, will this knot do?"

"The bo'sn himself couldn't have turned a nater. Pity that for practice there's not more work of the kind to do. But she's that well fitted there's little of the kind on hand, batin' the twistin' up o' spunyarn and those sort of jobs."

"Yes! I didn't know that traders were as well found as this."

O'Neill's eyes twinkled. "Trade, is it? An' what did yez think we'll be afther tradin' in?"

"Why, what's in the hold?"

"Limestone—ballast. But there's a big powdher room choke full to the beams; lashin's o' shot, round, bar, and grape; half-a-dozen more heavy guns down below; an' as many stand o' small arms, as there are hairs on the back of yer honour's hand."

"Then what's going to be done?"

"We shall run into some snug little bay in the West Indies, have a short spell ashore, then fill up the wather-casks and revictual with *bucan*.* Perhaps the skipper will careen her first. That depends. Anyway, when we're fitted out afresh, we shall set out to cruise. When we meet a Jack Spaniard or a Johnny Portingale, why, then we shall trade round shot and powder smoke for whatever he's got aboard him. And, from what I've heard o' the skipper, there'll be precious few craft on the seas that'd be too big or too ugly for him to tackle."

It turned out much as O'Neill said. After a long and tedious passage, the *Fortune's Favourite* ran into snug anchorage in a little-known harbour in the West Indian islands. Save for a few who were kept to guard the ship, her crew were all given shore leave, and enjoyed it according to their own lights. Some of them were noisy, and when they had got a pint or so of poisonous white rum on board, inclined to be quarrelsome; and there were one or two brawls in which blood was drawn. They were a somewhat unpolished set, these old-time warrior-mariners I do not mean to say that they were brutal ruffians, as were the pirates of a later date; but they were hard, and tough, and coarse-fibred; ready to take shrewd blows or to give them at a moment's notice. They were the outcome of the times they lived in. Our respected great-great-grandfathers who lived ashore were just as bad.

Save for those who were down with scurvy—and these were allowed to remain on shore under Dr. Menteith's and Sandy's care—save for the sick, Captain Grum had all his crew aboard again after they had enjoyed a three days' run; and, sooth to say, most of them were glad enough to set about their duty once more. The chief mate went off with the long-boat, strongly manned, to purchase a supply of cured beef from bucaniers in one of the adjacent islands, and the remaining hands set about refitting the snow.

There was plenty to be done. The holds had to be white-washed, and the ballast retrimmed. The boatswain and his mates were engaged in re-setting up the standing rigging and overhauling the running gear. Then the spare anchors, cables, and heavier guns were sent ashore or lowered into the boats, and the snow was run aground and careened, by strong tackles to her mastheads, so that the long trailing weeds and barnacles might be scraped away, and her bottom left as clean and smooth as possible. Then there was heaps of painting to be done; the water casks to be filled ashore and floated off; the bucaned meat to be headed up in tierces, and struck below; and a thousand and one other jobs which need not be enumerated.

Every man on board had an interest in the prospective prize-money, and worked with might and main, but it was not until three weeks after she had come to her first anchorage that Captain Reuben Grum gave his crew a final half-day's shore leave preparatory to beginning his cruise.

This book is not intended as the chronicle of an eighteenth century privateer's cruise. The work was laudable enough from a patriotic point of view, for the Royal Navy was weak; and had it not been for the warships of private individuals, we might never have broken the naval power of Spain, and the history of Europe would probably be very different from what it is.

So I shall not follow out the various features of the cruise *seriatim*. Suffice it to say, that the *Fortune's Favourite* did not on the whole belie her name. She captured two vessels of her own tonnage, two of slighter burden, and one big fellow of twice her size, who proved after a very tough fight to be laden with crockery, and not worth the powder and shot expended, let alone the human lives. She chased several craft which proved to have the heels of her; she had to run once from a couple

* A word of explanation is necessary here. By an old edict from the Papal See, the King of Spain considered himself sole possessor of the continents and islands of the western hemisphere. Acting on this principle, he strenuously closed his ports to the ships of aliens. The wealth of the new world was notorious, and the men of other nations wished to share it. Of these, the French to a certain extent, and the English more largely, seconded their wishes by vigorous effort. They sent out their ships and sought to take by force of arms what they were not allowed to try for by honest trading. The crews of their ships were drawn from all grades of society, but, once in western seas, their manners were not altogether lamb-like. The Spaniards and the Portuguese treated them like rabid dogs when they got the upper hand; and, somewhat naturally, the English were not over tender when chance or strength gave them the upper hand. Yet little enough was thought of it then. Society now is not what it was in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. *Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis.*

The question of victualling was of course a serious one. However, demand is always met by supply. To provision these free-lances, a race of men of mixed nationality sprung up amongst the West Indian islands notably on Cuba. These hunted the wild cattle, and *bucaned* their flesh—that is, smoke-dried it. They themselves were styled *bucaniers*. In time the word got misapplied, and those who consumed the *bucaned* meat—to wit, the seamen-soldiers, who preyed on Spanish commerce—were called "buccaneers."

Just before the time of which I write—in the year 1711—certain of the colonial Spanish ports were thrown open to English shipping by the treaty of Assiento; but the privilege was shortly afterwards withdrawn. The treaty was restored at Aix-la-Chapelle in October 1748, and, in addition, the right was given to send a periodical vessel to the South Seas.

So be it understood:—After 1748, any English vessel which molested a Spanish or Portuguese vessel in time of peace was nothing more or less than a pirate; but before that date, the English vessel was held, by arguments which need not be cited here, perfectly within her right to capture or take a Spaniard in the western seas—if she could.

of frigates; and once, after a tough fight with a schooner and a big new brig, she was beaten off with one third of her crew *hors de combat*.

It was to this engagement that Sneyd owed his elevation to the quarter deck. Captain Grum, as unruffled as if he had gained a signal victory instead of suffering something very like defeat, called him up, complimented him on his day's work before the whole crew, and rated him as third

Some of them. . . . were inclined to be quarrelsome.

mate there and then on the spot, *vice* the former third mate promoted in place of the second mate killed.

O'Neill, too, filled a death vacancy, and found himself, much to his satisfaction, a petty officer, to wit, boatswain's mate.

That night, as they shared the same watch and shared the heavy toil of putting the snow to rights again after the heavy dusting she had received, O'Neill said, "It's capt'n of yer own ship I'll be seein' yer honour before another couple of years are over,"

"Maybe," returned Sneyd, "but not commanding a professed privateer. I don't care for the work overmuch. It's exciting and all that, and it's openly winked at by the authorities at home. But we aren't regularly at war with the Spaniards. If we were, I'd fight 'em willingly to the last drop."

"Yer honour is over scrupulous, to my way o' thinking. As for the authorities at home, they'd ha' hanged the pair o' us a few months agone av they could ha' caught us."

"I know that, and I begin to think they were quite right. That rising was a foolish thing. If I had the choice again, it isn't in Prince Charlie's army I should elect to fight."

"For me," remarked the Irishman, "it was a toss-up. I didn't much care which side I was on so long as there was a scrimmage, an' when Sir Thomas Sheridan comes up and says he, 'Murtagh, yez'll bear us a hand; we're agin the Government;' says I, 'Sir Thomas, it's meself's the bhoy to help yez.'"

Sneyd laughed at this naïve political choice, and continued: "I don't mind fighting the Spaniards once in a way, but I can't say I like the idea of making a regular business of it. It demoralises the men; you know that as well as I do. Why, only the other day, when that French brig spoke us off Carthagena, there were a whole lot of them grumbling because Captain Grum didn't have a slap at her. No; what I'd like, and what I intend to do some time, is to start round and go up to the Pacific coast as an honest, respectable trader. If one took out a general cargo, there should be, from what I've heard, a splendid price to be obtained for it. The Spaniards have kept the monopoly so far, and European goods would fetch fabulous amounts in specie and hard dollars. We'd go for honest trading, as I've said, the King of Spain and his confounded withdrawn Assiento Treaty notwithstanding; and then, if they interfere with us, why, it's their own look-out, and the best man licks the other."

"When yer honour tries that thrip, here's me that'll come along wid yez under any ratin' from ship's cook upwards."

It was not long after this conversation that chance threw in Sneyd's way the very opportunity he was looking for. The sturdy bow of the *Fortune's Favourite* was turned towards home. Her hold was full of rich merchandise, and richer rixdollars and specie, and her captain was satisfied with the gleanings of his cruise; when, lo! one night a smart schooner of some two hundred tons ran almost aboard of her. The smaller craft saw her mistake when it was too late, and tried to slip off; but an eighteen-pounder shot which sung through the leach of her mainsail, hinted to her that the snow was not to be trifled with, and so without more ado she made the best of a bad bargain, and hove-to. A boat which went over to take possession sent back word that the cargo consisted of what a Yankee would term "notions"; that is, it was "assorted."

Such a load would certainly not be worth carrying back to Bristol. Captain Grum's face was perplexed. Sneyd went up to him and asked for a few minutes' private conversation. He and the Captain retired to the latter's cabin.

After the lapse of some fifteen minutes, the chief mate was sent for, and the trio of them were closeted together for half-an-hour. Then they came on deck again, and the captain called for all hands. The men came trooping aft, wondering what was in the wind, and Grum addressed them as follows:—

"My lads, this cruise has turned out pretty profitably and you'll all have a tidy amount of prize-money to finger when we square up accounts at Bristol. Still, each man's share will have its limits, and I will confess that I should like to add to mine. So I intend to fit out the schooner yonder with a couple more heavy guns, some more small-arms, and a number of other things we can dispense with, and send her to cruise round the Horn, and up the Chilian and Peruvian coasts. My first mate here will go in command; Mr. Sneyd will be second officer; Mr. O'Neill, third; and Mr. Carmichael (who Dr. Menteith asserts to be thoroughly qualified for such a post) will join as surgeon. You know what the country there is as well as I do. The schooner will probably be back in Bristol river about a year after we get there.

"Now, from here home is clear sailing. We shall meet no enemy, and the snow does not require many hands to sail her, if those few hands put their backs into the work. So now fall into line, men, and take a pace forward those who will volunteer for the schooner."

Nearly nine-tenths of the snow's crew stepped forward with eager stride.

"That's too many. I can't have you all desert me,"

quoth the captain, with a gratified smile. "Some of the married men had better stand back."

No one stirred; and a voice from the crowd exclaimed, "Faith, sor, av some of us wasn't married 'tisn't here we'd be at all at all;" at which there was a general laugh.

"Well," said Grum, "I leave it to the officers to choose their crew. Captain Gauntlett, you may have ninety men all told, and though I say it, who am not given to praising, you have a rare good batch to pick from.

There was a cheer at this, and then Gauntlett set about making his selection.

All hands worked with a will to tranship to the schooner the heavy guns and their carriages, the ammunition, and the other war like stores with which it was intended to replenish her, and by midday on the morrow the two vessels had separated, after an interchange of frantic cheers, and stood away on their respective courses. The snow headed for England. The schooner bore up for the West Indies, where she could get rid of her prisoners, and lay in store of water, *bucan*, and other necessaries for the long trip round the icy Horn, into the then comparatively unknown waters of the Southern Pacific.

Captain Grum. . . . complimented him on his day's work.

CHAPTER III.

How it was decided to turn for home: how the ambergris was seen: how the black squall came down: how the jolly boat rode it out: and how she fared afterwards.

It was the day after their successful *coup* at Callao, and the officers of the schooner were sitting on their quarter-deck talking and smoking. No shore was in sight. The limitless blue of the Pacific stretched out in all directions, with scarcely so much as a breath of wind to tarnish its polished surface. The schooner had just steerage-way, and the bronzed, bearded fellow at the tiller was guiding her with one lightly placed hand. His other hand every now and again wiped the perspiration which beaded out on to his forehead.

The day was baking hot. There was not a cloud overhead. The vast hemisphere of heaven was blue, blue, blue everywhere, save in one spot almost at the zenith, and there trembled a piercing ball of white light, with a blazing halo round it. The sun's rays reflected off the lazily swelling water, and burnt the skin off one's face into ragged strips. The zephyr did little to temper the heat. Even under the quarter-deck awning, the officers found it almost unendurable. They were lying listlessly about, and every now and again one got up, and drawing a bucket or two of water, drenched himself and his companions.

It was after one of these douchings that Captain Gauntlett spoke.

"No place like 'ome, is there, lads? There's some as say England's a 'ole—hall fogs, an' rain, and general uncomfortableness. But gimme the thickest fog that London hever brewed, rayther than this bloomin' bake-'ouse."

"Will I give yez another souse?" inquired O'Neill who was standing by, canvas bucket in hand, himself dripping like a sea-god.

"No, 'vast for a spell. I'm wet as a fish, an' the water's hot enough to——"

"To bile spuds in," suggested the Irishman. "'Tis meself that 'ud gladly give ten dollars apiece for a dozen big maley ons, an' the schniff of a dacent turf fire to bake 'em over."

"The atmosphere of the British Isles might prove unhealthy for you and me, O'Neill," observed Sneyd thoughtfully.

"Sorra' bit of it, yer honour. We may go home now, and be as quiet as we like, so long as we don't go and make a noise of ourselves,"—after delivering which brilliant opinion, he laid himself down on the hot white deck-planks and joined the rest of the group in endeavouring to doze.

But Morpheus would not be wooed. Phœbus had command of the day, and did not brook divided attention. And so one or other of the group kept getting up and having recourse to the canvas bucket and the tepid sea-water.

"We reckoned this yere cruise to last a year," observed Gauntlett, raising himself on one elbow, and pushing his long grizzled locks back from his face with the other hand, "an' now it's just four months since we parted comp'ny with the snow." Just four months, but we've crammed

a deal into them in the way o' tradin'. 'Tisn't me that thought we'd 'a 'ad the twentieth part o' the luck. Why, she's reg'lar ballasted with dollars, an' bars, an' ingots."

"Had better pay than a bhoy gets turf-cuttin' in the bog," allowed O'Neill.

"But," contended Sneyd, who did not wish the cruise to come to a rapid end, "we haven't got rid of all the cargo. There's some woollen stuffs left and a score or so ot those bells, and a whole lot of cutlery."

"I know," rejoined Gauntlett crustily. "Don't take me for such a fool as to 'ave forgotten that, did yer? I know we could go on. There's a tidy lump o' trade stuff left, and we've height months' vituals at the least, not to mention that Doctor Sandy there 'as enough o' his beastly physics on hand to stop all our hap|etites by one-'arf. But that ain't what I was thinkin' about. Ye see that Callao biz, when all's said an' done, was a bit beyond our size. We 'ad luck, and we 'ad cheek, an' we scooped what we wanted. But that peppery old governor cove hain't agoin' to forget the way we paid our call in a nurry. 'Is blessed dignity was 'urt badly, an' you can lay all you're worth 'e'll be heven with us if 'e can. That blessed *Theresa* 'll be put into commission agin, sailor-fashion this time, 'stead o' soldier-fashion like she was before; an' she'd be a toughish mouthful if she was properly handled. An' besides that, word 'll be sent up and down the coast for other craft to look out for us; big 'uns they'll be too, for, mind you, the Dons have got some heavy vessels in them seas, an' they're not chary o' usin' 'em too, if they're put to it.

"Now, you're wantin' to hear what I'm drivin' at. Well, it's this. You all know old Isaac Gauntlett ain't afeered of a bit of a brush. You all know that 'e'll fight anything that floats if 'e's cornered, and hammer away small arms and great guns, board and repel boarders till the matter's squared one way or t'other. An' when 'e's poor, there's no man sets smaller value on 'is 'ide. But when Ike Gauntlett's got a holy sight of dollars to fall back on, as 'e 'as now, why, then the price of 'is pelt goes up to more for the square inch than many blokes 'ud even guess at. So there, lads; we'll call this a capstan-'ead council, and that's the side my bean's fallin'."

There was a silence, which Gauntlett broke by saying:

"Every man 'is say. Come, Surgeon Sandy, being the youngest, do you begin. If a solemn phiz means brains, you've the levellest 'ead o' the lot of us."

"Personally," said the surgeon, "I'd be for seeing it out here. I've a snug berth, and am not likely to fall into a better. But still I think Captain Gauntlett's proposal a wise one, and for this reason. The crew isn't so strong as it was. We've lost eleven men. Four were killed, two died of their wounds, five have succumbed to sickness for which I could make no cure. And the rest, there are quite twenty who are far from sound. It is my fault to a large extent, I daresay. I have done my best, but with so little experience——"

"Belay that, Surgeon Sandy," said Gauntlett, with rough kindness. "Without you we'd 'a 'ad nobody; an' besides, you may lay to it I'd never 'a let you go a-meddlin' with my crew if Doctor Mentieth hadn't said you was competent to do it. Sakes alive! Look what a stump you gave Bill Maitland. Took 'is starboard leg hoff at the knee-joint, you did, scare a month agone, an' there 'e is skylarkin' about just as hactive as a nape. Ain't got a tail, o' course, by way o' an extry warp, but uses 'is teeth as good as one. No; you write me out a flamin' Ha-1 certificate for yerself at the end o' this cruise, an' Ike Gauntlett 'll clap a cross 'is mark, below to show hall and hevery that you're the best surgeon 'e'd ever want to ampitate, sear, or physic 'im."

At which eulogy Sandy Carmichael was constrained to blush through his copper-coloured skin, and O'Neill to ejaculate "Brayvo!" encouragingly.

Sneyd took up the tale. "I'm beginning to think you are right, Captain. My own wish to stay longer in these seas was a purely selfish one. The romance of the unknown waters, and the glimpses of a country that one had only learnt about from sailors' hearsay, fascinated me. But every argument points out that the fascination would probably be brought to an abrupt conclusion, were any endeavour made to spin it out further. To stay longer would be folly—foolhardiness—madness. José de Lato is not the man to forget the way we had him on the hip. The coast will bristle with his war-vessels. And we can't hope to play the *Santa Thérèsa* game again. If we sail now, we shall have a clear course. If we wait, we shall find a couple of hungry eagles standing on and off the entrance to Magellan's Straits, ready to pick us up whether we try that way or the Horn."

"And you, O'Neill?" asked Gauntlett.

"Let's cut an' run as hard as we can go, Capt'n. There's stuff on board worth takin' care of, an' once ashore at Bristhol, it's meself that sees a great piece of divarsion on ahead. An' then, when the money's well nigh spent, why we'll refit the schooner wid the balance, an' stand out here again an' grab some more. For mind yez, barrin' the heat, an' barrin' the unmannerliness o' thim dons in never lettin' yez paceably ashore to say so much as a good-morrer to the ladies, 'tis the foinest cruisin' ground a bhoy wid a taste for a scrimmage could wish for."

"Then," said Gauntlett, "that's decided; an' I'm glad of it. By our articles you'd all a voice in the matter, an' I was rayther feering that with yer taste whetted for the dollars, you'd never rest till ye tried for more, and then very like lost the lot."

So saying, he gave the requisite directions to the helmsman for change of course, and then leaving Sneyd, who was officer of the watch, on deck, the rest went below for supper.

The announcement, "Homeward bound!" was received with acclamation forward. To most of the foremast hands, the prize-money they would have to share seemed a very mine of wealth, and although the majority of them would run through the greatest part of it during a week's jaunt on shore—as was the time-honoured custom of that day—they were eager enough to begin spending.

Sailors earned their money like horses then, and spent it like asses.

The wind was very light, but steady and favourable, and, under every stitch of cloth she could show, the schooner reeled off a fair number of knots. She was not doing her best speed, it is true, for there were thousands of barnacles sticking to her bottom, and a whole forest of long ribbony weeds, some of them as much as twenty feet long, streaming along her sides. But this was neither the place nor the time to careen, and the retardation had to be put up with. Once on the eastern coast, they hoped to find a convenient river where she could be put to rights again for the long passage across the Atlantic.

But some of the little schooner's complement were not destined to see their native shores again yet awhile; and this is how it came about.

(*To be continued.*)

FRIEND: "Do thoughts that came to you long ago ever return?"

Scribbler: "Oh, yes—if I inclosed a stamped envelope."

JOHNNY and Mary were both riding the hobby-horse. Johnny felt his limitations, and presently observed: "Sister, if one of us would get off there would be more room for me."

SHE: "How is it that you sometimes show such masculine energy, and again such womanly indecision."

He: "Oh, I suppose it is a matter of inheritance. You see, half of my ancestors were men and half were women?"

MY PATIENT'S GHOST.

THE duties of my calling as a professional nurse have taken me frequently, during the past ten years, into peculiar surroundings, and I have had many odd and not a few uncanny experiences in my ministrations.

It was about eight o'clock one evening in late December, 1872, that I received a summons to attend a gentleman who had been for some days suffering from an internal malady, and upon whom the attending surgeons had decided to operate that night. They had hoped to avoid this course, but, all other means of relief having been exhausted, and the patient slowly sinking, the last hope was an immediate operation.

Snow was falling gently in great feathery masses as I alighted from the train at the suburban station, and entering the carriage awaiting me, was driven rapidly and silently along the broad, smooth street toward the mansion occupied by the patient.

Mr. Boland was an eccentric bachelor, who lived all alone, save for a retinue of male servants, in the great house which loomed grim and imposing before me, as the carriage, passing under a huge stone archway, rolled up the broad drive and stood beneath the "*porte cochère*." The front door was opened by an austere looking person in sombre livery, who stood respectfully aside as I entered, while a footman, of equal soberness of dress and mien, approached, and taking my hat and coat, at once conducted me along the great hall to a small room. A cheerful open fire and smoking tea-kettle gave the apartment an air of homely comfort, and as I threw myself lazily into a big leather chair near the table, on which stood the tea-set, the silent and dignified servant poured some water into the tea-pot and silently took his leave.

I was soon restored to my normal condition of warmth through the magic influence of the tea, and sat pleasantly contemplating the fire, and wondering when I should be called to the business for which I had been summoned, when a footfall behind me caused me to turn my head, and I beheld, standing in the doorway, a third individual, who at once spoke; and though his tones sounded hollow and far away, I was thankful to hear even this distant semblance to the human voice in such a preternaturally silent house.

"I am instructed to inquire if Mr. Washburn is prepared to attend the bedside of Mr. Boland."

He stood like a statue carved from ebony, and as I inclined my head affirmatively, turned as if on a pivot and led the way along the hall and up the broad, gently rising staircase, at the top of which he threw open a door and bade me enter.

The bed-chamber into which I stepped was a large and lofty apartment lighted by two windows. A huge old-fashioned bed stood with its head against the north wall, while directly opposite was a fireplace, in which glowed a mass of coals, and above, a very fine Venetian mirror extending to the ceiling and occupying the whole of the chimneypiece. Between the windows in the east wall was a small, well-fitted book case, while a green-covered table on which stood a student lamp and a pile of periodicals, half-a-dozen easy chairs; a wash-stand and a small table containing a night-lamp and an assortment of medicine bottles, completed the furniture.

One of the four surgeons present informed me that the exigency of the case had demanded immediate action, and that they had been obliged to perform the operation about half-an-hour before my arrival, but that it had been so far successful, and that the subject's unusual vitality promised to carry him through safely. He was still under the influence of the anæsthetic, a condition which his stertorous breathing plainly indicated, and was resting quietly in the bed to which he had been transferred from the improvised operating table.

After some few minutes, the surgeons retired from the room, leaving me alone with the patient, but with instructions to call them upon his regaining consciousness. Seating myself near the bedside, I took the man's hand in my fingers and closely noted the action of the pulse. The great house might have been deserted by all save the sick man and myself, the only audible signs of habitation being his laboured breathing.

In the course of half an hour consciousness returned, and I at once pulled the bell-cord, thus summoning the physicians. Mr. Boland was soon made as comfortable as his condition admitted of, and bidding me good-night, three of the physicians took their leave, one, Dr. Morton, deciding to remain for the night, in order to assist me in any possible emergency. He soon retired from the room, going to a small apartment on the floor below, in which was a comfortable sofa where he could obtain a much-needed rest, and from where he could also be quickly summoned by a bell-cord communicating between that room and Mr. Boland's.

For some time I sat at the table, reading here and there from the magazines, interrupting myself only to administer medicine to the patient.

The house was as silent as the grave.

About midnight the snow had ceased falling, and the moon came out from her screen of clouds, lighting up the wintry scene in weird radiance. Not the faintest breath of air stirred the gaunt branches with their soft white covering. Standing by the window the picture was, to me, deeply impressive of Nature's poetic handiwork, and it moved me to a deep reverence for the great Mystery of Life.

As I silently and gravely contemplated the scene before me, a peculiar, fluttering sigh came to my ears, and I hurried to the bedside. The sick man was lying on his side, his face towards me, and as I looked into the expressionless eyes, my professional instincts, sharpened by the memory of many scenes, told me at once that the climax had been reached, and that the end was near.

Stepping quickly across the floor, I pulled the bell-cord sharply. Hurrying back, I administered a hypodermic injection and had replaced the syringe when Dr. Morton entered the room. He simply opened wide the now drooping eye-lid, and regarded the pupil, shook his head and sat down.

"There's nothing to be done; he will be dead in five minutes. I suppose you know the pain has entirely subsided?"

I replied in the affirmative, and took my stand at the foot of the bed, while, in the calm and solemn stillness

of that December midnight, the spirit of Christopher Boland took its flight.

After saying that he would leave word at the undertaker's to call at eight o'clock in the morning, Dr. Morton took his departure, and there being no reason why I should lose the remainder of the night's rest, I prepared to retire. No superstitious dread of a dead man had a part in my composition, and throwing off my coat and shoes, I drew the sheet over the entire body, and extinguishing the lamp—the moon shone brightly enough for any ordinary purpose—lay down on the bed, and drawing the blankets about me, was soon asleep by the side of the late Mr. Christopher Boland.

A feeling of restlessness followed a brief interval of disturbing dreams in which a pair of penetrating eyes were the predominant element, and I awoke with a start.

One can seldom gauge accurately the time passed in sleep, but, judging from the positions of the shadows cast upon the floor by the moon, I presumed the hour to be about three. My first glance was at the body beside which I lay. It was, of course, in the position in which it had been last placed, the sheet which alone covered it falling in at the eyes and again midway down the trunk, leaving two sharply defined prominences at the nose and feet, and provoking in my newly-awakened brain that uncanny sensation with which many are so disagreeably familiar.

At almost the same instant I detected the strong smell of tobacco smoke. Not being myself a user of the soothing narcotic in any form, and no one having smoked in the room since my arrival, I instantly cast my eyes about in search of the intruder, who, I thought, must have entered during my sleep.

The moon had passed beyond the edge of the roof, and its rays were less brilliant than when I had retired. As my searching glance reached the east wall, it met an object which caused me to spring from the bed and stand gazing in stupid horror!

The Thing, whatever, it was, was of human shape as far as erect stature is concerned; it was enveloped in white from head to foot no sign of flesh showing, save the face, and as it glided to and fro before the windows, a cigar, from which arose great blue-white clouds of smoke, was held between its teeth.

As it slowly turned, my blood grew cold and creepy, for, as I gazed, the face met mine, the eyes glowed like two phosphorescent globes as they looked straight at me and—the features were those of Christopher Boland!

The awful sight of the spirit of the man whom I thought lying dead beside me, pacing about the room smoking a cigar as in life, utterly unnerved me, and I stood, half crouching, by the bedside, my gaze riveted in horrified fascination upon it.

By a supreme effort of will, I reached towards the corpse, at the same time keeping my eyes upon the apparition, and quickly drew the sheet from the face. For an instant I looked at the features, calm in death, but that instant was enough to have driven many a man stark mad, for the last doubt as to my half-awakened senses, had fled—the body in the bed and the Thing were of feature identical.

Although my memory is perfectly, in fact painfully clear on the whole night's events, yet at that moment I think my mind must have wandered, for, without exactly knowing how I did it, I found myself stealthily approaching the Thing, as if to grasp it. I had almost reached it, when it turned, and those two fearful burning eyes seemed to pierce me and look onward into interminable space! And even as I paused, it slowly approached me, its frightful gaze throwing me into a condition of hypnotic helplessness; the fire from the burning cigar producing the effect of a third terrible eye.

I was between it and the bed; flight was impossible, but even had the way been clear before me, escape would have been equally hopeless, my legs shaking, my every nerve trembling, while I could not take my eyes from those others that seemed to pierce my very soul.

Straight towards me it came, neither looking to right nor left, but through and beyond me. I drew myself close to the wall; closer, closer, it came, the deathly pale features striking terror through and through me, the awful eyes burning into me. I could feel the grave-damp mist surrounding it, so near was it. Time was no more, a second and a year were alike to me; stricken, paralysed nerves; in a moment more, one single move, and the awful thing would be upon me. Heavens! It turned in its course, and with increasing speed, glided past the bed, and in an instant more a wreath of smoke came backwards over its head as it vanished through the open door.

With returning reason, I staggered towards the bell-cord to ring for help, but even as my shaking arm reached upward, the awful thing returned and rapidly approached me. A sudden and complete revulsion of feeling overcame me, and with the frenzy born of mortal terror, I rushed at the Presence and threw myself at its throat.

Instantly I found myself in the embrace of a pair of icy arms, for which my strength was no match, that tore my hands away and flung me violently against the table, upsetting it and throwing the lamp and books to the floor in crashing confusion. I was struggling to regain my feet from amidst the mass, when, with a wild, unearthly, echoing scream that rang throughout the house it turned and fled like a wraith from the room.

This move on the part of my recent antagonist lent me growing courage, and I rushed after it. Even in that moment, so vividly are trifles sometimes impressed upon one's sharpened wits, I recall seeing the still smoking cigar lying on the carpet where it had been dropped in the scuffle.

As I emerged from the room into the broad hall, a sound of a heavily falling body came from the bottom of the stairs, and I saw in the dim light cast by the swinging lamp above me, a white form lying on the landing below: at the same time there was the pattering rush of stockinged feet, and three forms threw themselves upon the recumbent figure, while I sprang down among them.

The three additions to the *melée* were the butler and two footmen, and in their arms they held the half fainting form of another man.

Explanations were at once in order. The fainting man was a somnambulistic servant, whose close physical resemblance to his master had been the cause of one or two previous complications; the effect of this similarity to the dead had been intensified by the uncertain reflection of the moon's rays from the snow. The glowing eyes were the result of my fevered imagination coupled with my concentration of gaze upon the lighted cigar, after having once seen those eyes glisten for an instant in the weird light of the room.

The violent awakening of the somnambulist proved nearly his death, though he finally recovered after a severe attack of brain fever, while my own premature white hair attests the awful agony of those few brief but frightful moments with the smoking ghost.

ELMAR END.

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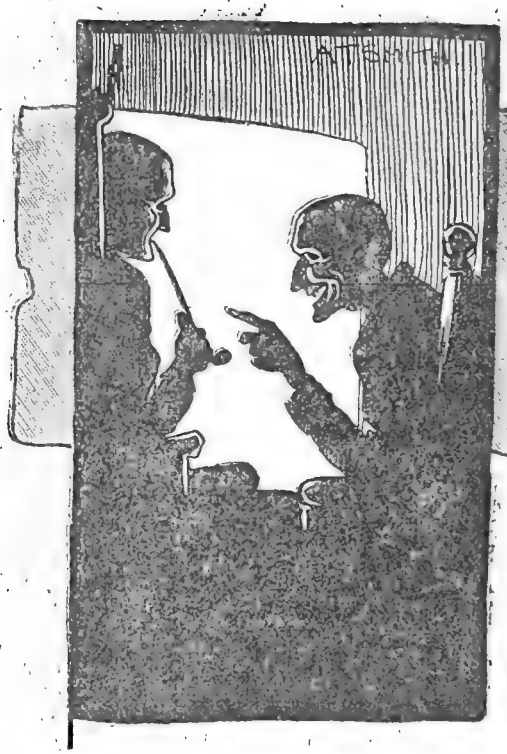


A Peruvian Millionaire.

JABEZ HEATH THORNTON was his full name. He was called Jay by his cronies, Thornton Heath by wags, and Mr. Thornton by the various dukes, baronets and knights who were able to squeeze gold out of the "Peruvian Millionaire."

His face was almost saintly in aspect, owing to a peculiar benevolent smile which continually hovered round his mouth. In figure he was tall, rotund, and possessing that characteristic popularly supposed to belong to members of British corporations.

Jabez H. Thornton had done every thing as became a millionaire. He owned race horses which always came in last when he backed them, or romped home when he laid heavy odds against them. He owned a paper, universally run down, which was known under the sobriquet of *Intellect* but which was in reality an outrage on that gift; therefore, when a facetious "comp" slipped in "Rats" beneath the title, the world echoed the sentiment and *Intellect* expired.

He had presented a drinking-fountain to Camden Town, an obelisk to the inhabitants of Cobham-in-the-Marsh, and three hospitals and a deaf and dumb asylum owed their existence to him.

Having done everything that was expected of him, Jabez proposed and was accepted. Perhaps his millions influenced the lady of his choice, or perchance, being above such sordid considerations, she had been attracted by Jabez's beautiful expression.

This was the tale she cooed to Jabez, and Jabez credited the statement.

So overjoyed was he by the avowal, that he straightway gave orders for a grand ball to be given in honour of the engagement, and in his lordly style proceeded to make the fortunes of some dozen tradesmen.

Royalty was invited and accepted the invitations. France, Italy, Russia and Peru were represented, and Thornton, overjoyed at the way he had managed to wriggle into society, was everywhere greeting his guests with effusion—the male portion—and welcoming the ladies with complimentary glances, well-chosen phrases, and with as much bowing and grace as his somewhat rotund person would allow.

"I must compliment you, señor, on the magnificent entertainment you have provided for our amusement," exclaimed Don Pervibelli del Igo Juera, shaking his host cordially by the hand.

"Yes, it's fairish," replied Thornton, beaming, as he mopped his forehead. "I'm glad you like it; the electric lights in those orchids are my own idea."

"Charming, my dear sir," answered Don Pervibelli, toying carelessly with the cross of St. James, his sole decoration. "Truly charming, *à propos* I must congratulate you on your engagement with the *bella senortta* Violet McKay."

Again Thornton beamed, twirled his fingers nervously, and finding nothing appropriate to say, mopped his face vigorously.

"I have taken the liberty, *amigo mio*, to bring a Peruvian friend with me, to see the magnificence of your ball. May I trust I stand forgiven?"

The well-turned compliment sank into the credulous heart of the millionaire, who replied with a sudden burst of generosity:

"Señor, treat my house as if it were your own. I am only too glad to welcome any friend of yours."

Don Pervibelli smiled an unfathomable smile, which, had Thornton been able to read it, would have made him regret his last sentence.

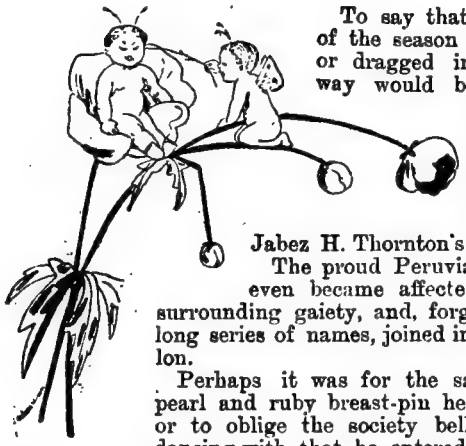
"The señor Americano is too good."

"Shucks; that is bosh!" retorted Thornton giving the attaché a familiar pat on the shoulder. "And where is your friend?"

"Ah, señor," replied Pervibelli, deprecatingly. "*Mi amigo*, as he entered, saw a lady—you comprehend?" he elevated his shoulders and spread out his hands, palms outwards. "*Mi amigo* is what you call a sad flirt."

Thornton laughed gaily, then advanced to greet more guests with his sister, and failed to note the peculiar glimmer of malice which lurked in Pervibelli's eyes for a moment or so.

"I wonder what Svenela would say to be called a flirt? Well, perhaps he is, *when he has other things on hand!*" muttered the Peruvian attaché sombrely.



To say that *the* affair of the season hung fire, or dragged in any one way would be a gross calumny! Never had anything started with the swing of Jabez H. Thornton's ball.

The proud Peruvian attaché even became affected by the surrounding gaiety, and, forgetting his long series of names, joined in the cotillon.

Perhaps it was for the sake of the pearl and ruby breast-pin he obtained, or to oblige the society belle he was dancing with, that he entered the cotillon; be it as it may, the Señor Don Pervibelli del Igo Juera so far forgot his dignity as to dance.

He smiled peculiarly the whole evening, and when he took his partner to supper the smile became more pronounced.

As was expected, the supper proved a feast that would not have disgraced the Board of Crœsus, and the good things commenced to vanish in the customary way amid a buzz of conversation, till Jabez H. Thornton rose, and, holding a silver goblet of champagne in his hand, exclaimed:

"I believe that at every gathering the health of Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria, should be proposed, therefore I do the same."

The toast was drunk; then Thornton exclaimed:

"It is a great pleasure to me to welcome my friends round my humble board to-night! And I am about to ratify a promise I made to several of you, as to the mode in which I made my pile, to-night—It has been my very proud boast that when I set foot in Peru, I had not what you Britishers call a "stiver" in my pockets.

"I hadn't enough to buy a dinner, let alone pay my fare to Lima! I remember at the time I anathematised my luck, but now I have every reason to bless the providence, which ordained that I should *tramp* to the capital of Peru!"

He paused, and glanced amusedly round at the expectant faces bent on his, then continued:

"I had gone, by accident, some twenty miles out of course on the Cordilleras; and being thoroughly worn out, I flung myself on the rocky ground. I slipped, and to save myself from falling down a somewhat steep declivity, clutched at a small rock. The jerk wrenched it out of the parent earth. It was at its base that I discovered my first aid to wealth—It was there I found "The Eye of Peru Ruby," I bought the land with the money obtained by the sale of the stone, and became what I am!"

"The señor is to be congratulated on the way he made his fortune, and also for the manner in which he relates the story of his road to wealth," remarked a quiet voice from the end of the table.

Thornton glanced in the direction whence the voice came, and noticed a face which was strangely familiar to him.

Jabez started guiltily.

"I also know a story of how an American señor made his fortune near Lima. With the permission of the *hidalgos* and *señoritas* present, I will relate the tale."

"Come, come, señor!" cried Jabez H. Thornton, turning oddly pale, "this is not a time for anecdotes! We shall doubtless be very pleased to hear your tale of the way in which the American made his pile—on another occasion."

"As the señor desires!" replied the other, rising and bowing courteously. "For another time let it be! I can assure you it is very interesting!"

"No, let us have it now!" cried Violet McKay impulsively, a sentiment which was generally echoed.

"I bow to your wishes," replied the guest, deprecatingly. "If I go wrong I trust to the Señor Thornton to put me right. I forget places after I have left them," he added apologetically.

"I fail to see how I can put you right over detail, if I don't know the place you mention," replied Thornton irritably.

"Still I think the señor will know the place I mention," replied the other in an odd voice.

Thornton shivered at the sinister intonation; he had a presentiment that some evil was about to befall him.

"If that is the case," replied Thornton, with a bad attempt at ease of manner, "rely on me to help you."

The Peruvian bowed, then said:

"About twenty miles from Lima, in the direction of Paseo, there is a deep ravine, It is called the *Cañon del Demonicos*. It is a wild and erie spot, the home of the vulture, condor and frigate bird. Its high scarped rocks tower heavenwards, to be tipped with everlasting snows. The solitude which reigns in this gloomy cañon is awesome, but when a storm rages nowhere could there be more tumult! Am I not correct, señor?"

Jabez H. Thornton bowed.

"I was positive the señor would aid me with his recollection," said the Peruvian blandly.

Thornton started, then pouring himself out a glass of champagne with trembling hand, exclaimed:

"I have seen the place you mention, that is all."

"I imagined so," replied the Peruvian drily. "Along the side of this ravine runs a twisted path—let me see, it leads to a cavern, an ancient fane of the fireworshippers, does it not, señor?"

"How should I know?" retorted Jabez angrily.

"I apologise! Well about seven years ago, within this cavern dwelt a priest and his daughter Thaide. She was very beautiful—very beautiful," he added abstractedly. "She was also young—some eighteen years of age. Had she not been so youthful," continued the Peruvian reflectively, "she would not have committed the error she did, an error which debarred her from entering the world to come."

He paused to glance at Thornton, who, ashy pale, was regarding him with a terror-struck stare.

"Thaide was credulous, and thus became a willing dupe of an *American hidalgo* whom ill luck brought one day down the ravine path, leading to the ancient temple of Fire, and caused the priest to anathematise his daughter, the man, and the day he was born.

"Thaide was at the cavern mouth when the *Americano* passed along. He saw her, and spoke. Days flew by, the stranger was always near to whisper his poison in the priest's daughter's ear, and she—believed and loved the American *hidalgo*."

Once more he paused to glance at Thornton. His ghastly pallor had increased. He was gulping down raw brandy.

"The *hidalgo* wooed and won her heart; to him she communicated the mystery of her faith, the place where the 'Eye of Fire' lay hidden, and showed him the temple's treasure. The greed of the man was awakened, the scoundrel proposed that they should elope and take the Fire treasure with them."

"Well?" hissed Thornton. "Well?"

"Thaide at first demurred, the scoundrel urged his love, and she, unhappy maiden, agreed. In the dead of night the guilty pair stole into the inner temple and wrenched the 'Eye of Fire' from its fastenings, abstracting the sacred jewels from their cases and vessels of worship. Then came a tragedy to add to the horrors of the night."

Pallid to the very lips, the millionaire poured himself out a glass of port, which he raised to his lips with palsied hand.

"Blinded by the lust of gold, the *American hidalgo* dresolve that there should not be two to share the ill-gotten wealth. In the outer cave, on the plea of not allowing her to carry any weight, he transferred the booty to his own person, and, as with loving hand she placed the last jewel in the bag he carried, he shot her twice in the breast and fled!

"The reports brought the priest on the scene, only in time to catch her last breath. With voice full of anguish he reviled his child, as dictated by his religion; then pressing his lips to the blood-stained face of his child, prayed as only a broken heart can pray, for the revoking of the awful malediction. Then, rising, he swore to avenge the child he loved better than life!"

"And the American," gasped the millionaire, "what became of him?

"All in good time, señor," replied the Peruvian, in even tones. "He first went to New York City, then came to London——"

"London? London?" gasped Thornton, his eyes nearly starting from their sockets.

"*Si*—London, why not?" replied the Peruvian, his eyes gleaming strangely. "For six years the priest has waited in vain for an opportunity to strike the murderer of his child, when it would hurt him most. Shall we wish him success in his hopes, Señor?"

"Yes—er—by all means!" faltered the millionaire.

"Even when I say the *American hidalgo's* name is *Jabez Heath Thornton?*" cried the Peruvian mercilessly.

Thornton became livid. By a violent display of will, he collected himself and leaping to his feet, shouted hoarsely, as he flung his glass down on the table:

"You lie!"

The Peruvian flushed, his eye danced with fire as he almost hissed:

"Murderer and thief, do you dare call the Fire priest Svenela a liar?"

"Svenela?" shrieked the millionaire, panic-struck. "Oh, Heavens! I recognise your face! Help me, friends, he'll murder me!—Help! Help——"

Three shots fired in rapid succession across the table, silenced the shrieks of the guilty man, then the Peruvian, throwing down his smoking revolver, cried:

"I know the law of England relative to killing your fellow man. Call an officer. I surrender."

The next day the newspaper boys made a lot of money with special editions.

Tristram K. Monck.

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All applications for No. 16 distribution must reach us by January 23rd, addressed to The 16th Sovereign Editor, "Short Stories" Office, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Each application must be made separately.

Result of 13th Sovereign Distribution.

Sovereigns have been sent to:

W. E. Keyte, 7 Promenade, South Street, Rochdale, C. Grey, 16 Chapel Street, Gosport, Hants,

both having applied for them under the conditions of the Distribution Scheme.

The unclaimed sovereigns were addressed to the following people:

W. Doig, 7 Roxburgh Street, Galashiels; Thos. Abel, 3 Blackfriars Street, Here ord; John Cottam, Caxton House, Oswestry; Geo. Bell, Castle Street, Dornoch, N.B.; Mrs. Edwards, 159 Gray's Inn Road, W.C.; H. Hammond, 158 Euston Road, N.W.; J. S. Harrisson, 8 Foster Lane, E.C.; Chas. Field, 16 Unicorn Hill, Redditch; J. Groves, 9 Belle Vue Crescent, Cockington, Devon; Thos. Bickford, Atlantic Hotel, Hugh Street, St. Mary's, Scilly Isles; W. James, Market Street, Penryn, Cornwall; R. Kirkham, 5 Hyde Lane, Hyde, Cheshire; W. Pasher, Brook End, Catworth, Hunts; John Letts, Irchester, Northants; W. McCague, Lynn Road, Ely; H. Newson, Market Square, Fakenham; J. C. Taylor, Hall Farm, Drinkstone, Bury St. Edmunds; Jas. O'Flanagan, Nesham Place, Houghton-le-Spring; Miss Pringle, 3 Clive Terrace. Alnwick; Jos. Savage, Townhead, Ousby, Cumberland; J. W. Rowlandson, Kiln Head, Lambrigg, Grayrigg, Westmoreland; F. Uden, 9 Grace Hill, Folkestone; Chas. Voase, 121 Freeman Street, Great Grimsby; W. West, 135 Wincolmlee, Hull; ohn, Wright, King Street, Alfreton; C. Yorke, Weston Lodge, Lenton Road, Nottingham; Geo. Abbott, 1 West Street, Leicester; J. W. Ball, Post Office, Edith Weston, Rutland; W. H. Cox, Sunnyside, Peckridge, Staffs; E. Buchanan, 36 Mitchell Street, Clonmel; Jas. Donald, Irish Quarter West, Carrickfergus; G. E. Eagle, Medler Cottage, Shrivenham, Berks; W. Fleet, 78 High Street, Newport Pagnell; Mrs. Gardner, London Road, Chipping Norton; B. Hall, Greenfield Road, Scarborough; R. Jenkins, 5 Charles Street, Milford Haven; Mrs. Kingston, St. Ewins Bridge Street, Chepstow; W. Leach, Ivy Lodge, Martock; Chas. Morse, High Street, Lydney; Geo. Nicholls, 13 Pembroke Road, Clifton, Bristol; E. Otto, 4 Highgate Hill, N.; G. J. Thomson, 385 Romford Road, Forest Gate, E.; W. Reeves, 280 Dalston Lane, Hackney, N.E.; W. Brown, 33 Bay View Terrace, Penzance; C. Crosskill, 7 Oxford, Street, Wellingborough; Mrs. Kirk, 494 Glossop Road, Sheffield; J. Young, 24 Marshall Place, Perth; R. J. Ussher, J.P., Cappogh, Lismore, R.S.O., Co. Waterford.

AN HONOURABLE DESERTER.

In the course of my wanderings I have met a good many men who fought in the American Civil War, some on one side and some on the other; but I have only met one who fought on both sides, and it is his story that I am going to tell here as nearly as I can as it was told to me by one of the chief actors in the tragedy during a run from New York to the Bermudas on one of the summer boats.

He was what the Autocrat at the Breakfast Table has aptly described as a "pitch-pine Yankee," a tall, lank, loose-jointed, leather-skinned New Englander, strong as a horse, gentle as a woman, and in worldly matters practical down to the soles of his broad, flat boots.

It was a remark of mine about the difficulty that a good many men must have had in choosing sides when the shot from Fort Sumpter roused the continent to war that drew the story from him, and this is how he began:

"I never wanted to go into the war at all for my own part, and I don't think I ever should have done if it hadn't been for Arthur Wolstan's old man being clean jumping mad on abolitionism, and fairly driving him into the battle-field. Arthur and I had been chums ever since our first fight, and that took place pretty soon after we could stand. I came out top, and two or three days afterwards I licked a bigger boy who was putting upon him, and then we swore everlasting friendship, and friends we remained to the end.

"Arthur's father was a big man in our little New Hampshire town, a good deal bigger than mine, who was only a small farmer and store-keeper, but for all that we got to Harvard together from school, and there we became greater chums than ever, probably because our wider look at the world showed us the need of friendship in such a wilderness.

"Next to myself Arthur's greatest friend at Harvard was a man of about his own age, named Stanton Mouatt, a strong Southerner, and the cousin of the prettiest girl I have ever set eyes on. This man in the course of a few months got a very great influence over Arthur, but I never could cotton to him, and there was very little love lost between us.

"Mouatt was very much in love with his pretty cousin, but there was no formal engagement between them, and when Arthur met her one Thanksgiving time, he fell in love with her too, and, like the man that he was, told Mouatt so, and they arranged it between them that the one who could get her should have her, and the other one should be best man at the wedding to show that there was no ill-feeling.

"When the war broke out, Stanton Mouatt went South as a matter of course, and got a commission in a South Carolina regiment. Arthur and I didn't want to go blowing holes in our fellow creatures at all. We had gone into the question more from the student's point of view, and we knew how much commercial trickery and political wire-pulling there was beneath the big talk of the Northern men, and if anything our sympathy was with the Southerners; but, as I have said, old Wolstan was a hopeless crank on the subject of anti-slavery, and after a few pretty wild scenes between them he told Arthur, in a blazing rage, that he was either a Secessionist or a coward, and that anyhow he could choose between putting on the Federal uniform or being disowned and disinherited right away.

"If it hadn't been for his mother and sisters I believe the lad would have gone south there and then, for he was a high-spirited and sensitive young chap, and the slight on his character made him madder than I had ever seen him before. Then, too, there were Lilian Mouatt's pretty brown eyes looking at him out of Carolina, and he knew how they would welcome him when they saw him in the grey and silver.

"However, his women-folks over-persuaded him, and the end of it was that he allowed himself to be commissioned to the New Hampshire Regiment, and I went into the ranks, not because I cared a shuck about North or South, but because I wanted to follow the only friend I ever had in the world. You will see from this that neither of us had any very great heart in the game when we started at it.

"We got to work, smelt powder and blood, and after a bit got the savage in us roused enough to like them both. I was in Arthur's company, and though we had been through Bull Run and many another sharp tussle together, neither of us had got more than a few scratches to show for it. This good luck lasted down to the fall of '61, when the 5th New Hampshire were doing outpost duty down in East Kentucky, in rather a lonesome bit of country.

"I suppose you know that when the two armies were not actually at hammer and tongs, the pickets on both sides often hailed each other and had a friendly chat for a bit, and plenty of times I have known old friends meet in this way and talk over old times a few hours before they would be doing their level best to blow each other's brains out, or ride each other down in a cavalry charge.

"It was in this way that Arthur Wolstan and Stanton Mouatt met about twelve months after they had parted at Harvard. They recognised each other at once, and rode up and shook hands as cordially as though neither of them considered it his patriotic duty to shoot the other on sight the next time they met in battle. If you wanted to see the pure foolishness of war, just after one of the outpost meetings was the time to think the subject over.

"Well, Arthur and Mouatt had a long chat quite apart from the rest of us, and as we parted at last to go on our respective rounds they shook hands again, and as Arthur turned his horse he said:

"'So long, old man. See you again, I hope—when the war is over.'

"It was a foolish thing to talk apart to the Confederate at all, and still more foolish to shout such a

farewell as that and only mutter the last few words. Arthur had more than one enemy in the troop, and through a sergeant that he had once reported and had severely punished, a mixed-up, exaggerated report of what he had said and done got to the ears of the major, who was the best hated man in the regiment, and well deserved to be so, for he was as big a brute as ever wore a uniform.

"If he had really thought there was anything in what Arthur had said or done to give reason for suspicion, it was his place to have made a formal inquiry in the proper way, but instead of doing that he gossiped about it to the other officers, and at last openly insulted Arthur before his own comrades, by sneering out his opinion that it wouldn't cost the other side much to buy over Lieutenant Wolstan's valuable services and all the information he could remember.

"I never knew what Arthur had done to make this man hate him enough to do such a scandalous thing as this, but anyhow it was too much for hot blood like his, and the next day Major Beale received a challenge with an intimation that if it was not accepted he would be publicly kicked on the first favourable opportunity. Of course duelling on active service is punished with death if it is found out, but for all that it is done on extreme occasions like this. The Major, however, acted up to his character and sent the challenge to the Colonel, and the result was that poor Arthur was court-martialled, degraded to the ranks, and sentenced to six months' fortress duty.

"The night before he was to be removed a sharp attack was made on our position, and in the confusion I managed to knock over the sentry on guard at his hut and to get him out. That doesn't sound right to you, I suppose, but my friend was a lot more to me than North and South rolled up together, and I thought that he had been badly enough treated for someone to get hurt for it. I may mention just here that Major Beale did not survive the next battle.

"The Confederates drove our out-posts in after about three hours' hard fighting, and then drew off, as it was the object of the attack only to feel our pulse prior to a big battle that everyone felt would have to come off before very long. The treatment that Arthur had received had changed him from a lukewarm supporter of the North into a mad, unreasoning enemy, and as soon as the scurry of the attack was over he and I got out of the ditch where we were hiding and walked openly into the Confederate lines. The sentry challenged us, and half an hour later Arthur was in Captain Mouatt's tent discussing ways and means, and I was looking for a grey uniform to fit me.

"Desertion? Ye-es, I suppose it was, though at the time we called it changing sides, and we saved our consciences a bit by obstinately refusing to give the slightest information that could be of any use to the Southerners. It was this refusal that brought Stanton Mouatt out in his true colours, and led to a row that ended in two funerals, and very nearly in three.

"It was about a week after we went over. A biggish battle had been fought, and we had got the worst of it. The night after the fight Mouatt took Arthur away down a little valley with a stream in it called Maddox Run, to pump him about the strength of a position on which a night attack was to be made. I never had much faith in Arthur's Southern chum, and so when I saw them going off towards the glen I took it into my head to follow them at a respectful distance so as to be handy in case anything unpleasant happened. When they stopped in a sheltered little nook, I crept up close enough to hear them talk.

"Things went just as I thought they would. Mouatt did all he knew to persuade Arthur to give him the information. At last when all persuasion had failed, he lost his temper and tried threats. Then I heard Arthur say, as if to stop the discussion.

"'I would rather give myself up to the Federals and be shot for what I am—what your evil counsel and my own mad temper have made me—than be guilty of such treachery as that, so you can spare your breath. As for your threats I will only say that if you push the matter any further I shall take it as a personal insult and act accordingly.'

"I saw Mouatt's pale face flush a dusky red and his lips curl under his dark moustache, as he sneered out his answer:

"'My only objection to your going back to the Johnnies would be the fear that you might give them what you won't give us. There's not much use in a deserter, anyhow, if you can't get information out of him.'

"The words were hardly out of his mouth when Arthur's fist flew straight out from his shoulder, and sent Mouatt down like a felled ox with his mouth half full of blood and teeth. As soon as he realised what had happened he put his handkerchief to his mouth with one hand, and with the other he drew a revolver, and was just drawing a bead on Arthur when I jumped out on him, and got the bullet through the roots of my hair trying to screw the pistol out of his hand.

It was only a flesh wound, for the bullet grazed my skull without breaking anything, but it knocked the senses out of me for two or three hours, and when I came to myself it was moonlight, and clear enough for me to see the body of my old chum lying on its back within ten paces of me.

"I struggled to my feet, and went to him. There was a bullet hole just over his heart, and his pockets had been completely rifled. It was as foul a murder as had ever been committed, and as I dug the best grave I could for him with my cavalry cutlass, I swore that his murderer should pay the penalty for it as suddenly as I could make him. I saw through the whole plan now. Mouatt had tempted him to desert, and tried to disgrace him for good and all by making him a spy into the bargain, so that the question who should marry his cousin might be settled in his own favour right away. Failing in this he had provoked the quarrel and shot him in his tracks like a dog.

"That let me out on regular soldiering, and when my scalp was healed up I joined a troop of Confederate scouts and raided around impartially until my chance came."

"Then," said I, "I presume that Captain Mouatt did not marry his cousin after all?"

"No, sir, he didn't live long enough. He survived the chances of war a lot better than he deserved to do, but just before Lee got himself shut up in Richmond, Mouatt took his troop out foraging in the same district that our irregulars were working. I got the drop on him over my horse's back at long range, and did what the hangman couldn't have done under the circumstances. After the war was over I hunted up the pretty cousin and told her the whole story. She agreed with me that justice had been done, but she couldn't bring herself to marry me, though I tried very hard to persuade her. I believe she liked me, but she couldn't get over the shooting. Some women object to it, and she was one of them."

T. MASON.

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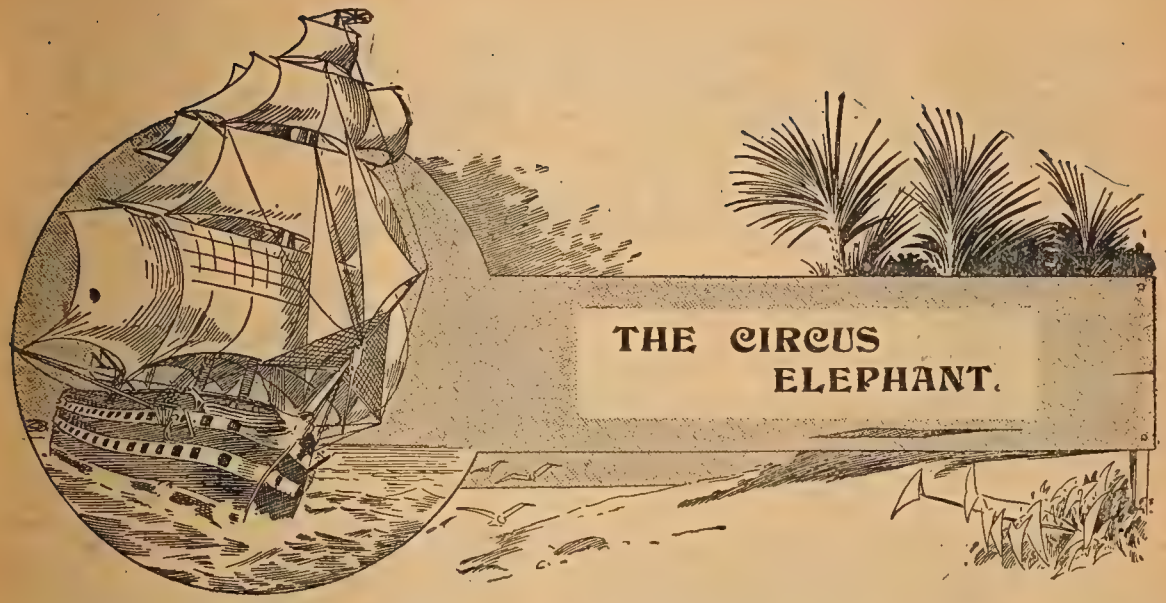


THE CIRCUS ELEPHANT.

THE small town of Little Peddlington had for some time been liberally placarded with announcements that a circus was coming, and that a grand street parade would be given on its entrance. When the event so long foreshadowed and anticipated came to pass, all the inhabitants, as a matter of course, turned out to witness it, and the procession duly took place. It was not as imposing a pageant as Sanger's; still, it was considered a very gorgeous affair in Little Peddlington.

There were live lions in cages, but they were old and feeble monarchs of the forest, and allowed the little boys to poke them through the bars with impunity. Still, they were real lions—or had been before they became so reduced in spirits and circumstances as to be compelled to take to the show business—and that was something.

The lions might have passed muster in little Peddlington, but the "magnificent trained elephant, purchased at enormous expense from his Imperial Highness the Maharajah of Seringapatam," was a dead failure. This was a sad blow to the inhabitants of Little Peddlington, for they had looked forward to the elephant as the chief attraction of the circus parade. What made their disappointment all the more severe was the fact that at starting the "magnificent trained elephant" was the greatest success in the procession.

Punctually at the hour advertised the elephant led off the parade, and the delighted spectators applauded enthusiastically.

True, the elephant was rather smaller than the public had been led to believe, but what it lacked in size it evidently made up for in intelligence, for as it bounded along majestically leading the procession, it waved its trunk gracefully and bowed to the spectators, first on the right hand and then on the left.

"How wonderfully trained!" exclaimed some.

"Could almost believe that it was gifted with reason just like a human being!" cried others; and there was no doubt that the late property of the Maharajah of Seringapatam was installed first favourite in the public opinion of Little Peddlington.

Unfortunately, however, a slight incident now occurred which speedily deprived it of its pride of place in popular favour, and tended seriously to lower Little Peddlington's opinion of elephants in general, and the Maharajah of Seringapatam's in particular.

It appears that one of the mischievous urchins of the town, who formed one of the great crowd that walked beside the centre of attraction, took it into his head to prick one of the hind legs of the elephant, whereupon the animal directed a vicious kick at his tormentor.

This in itself would not have surprised the beholders, but it did surprise them to hear a particularly distinct human voice from the animal's interior, crying:

"Now, then, drop it, will yer?"

Slowly it began to dawn upon the spectators that there was more in the elephant purchased from the Maharajah of Seringapatam than met the eye, and they urged on the little local arab to repeat the pricking process, which he did with increased vigour.

"Great Christopher!" shouted the voice from within, "I ain't going to stand this for no blessed circus show in creation!"

Up went the rear of the elephant in the air, and the hind-legs, carrying on them the head and body of an overgrown boy, squaring up in fighting attitude, hurled defiance at the crowd.

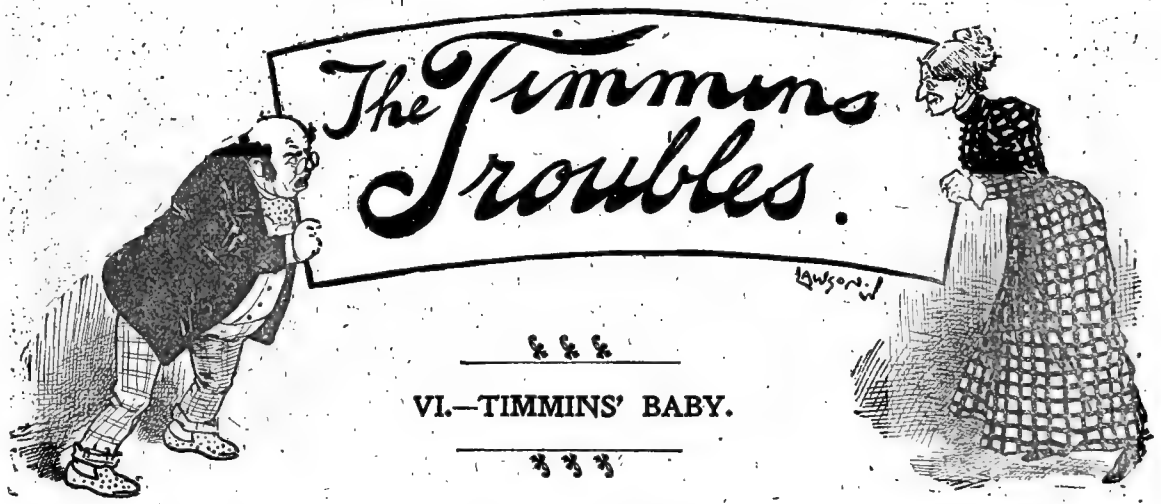
"I knows as I've come down to be the hind-legs of a helephant, but I won't be insulted by any idiot in this town, anyhow."

The front legs of the elephant were meanwhile struggling gamely on, but the elephant's centre of gravity had not been regulated for it to go as a biped. The result was that after a few ineffectual struggles the hind portion settled down like a ship at sea, and the front legs went up in the air, while a piteous voice screamed:

"Let me outer this, or I'll be choked!"

The people pulled the front legs out of the animal, and thus saved another human being from an untimely end. The circus proprietor rode up in a fearful state of mind, and commenced lashing the elephant's front and hind legs with his whip, but the damage was done. The show was a dead failure, and the residents of Little Peddlington lost their faith in elephants for evermore.

G. A. P.



VI.—TIMMINS' BABY.

"WELL, well, well," said Mr. Timmins, with a grin that involved his whole head, and an effort at a tip-toe that shook the whole house. "And so it's a girl, my dear."

Mrs. Timmins smiled faintly, and Mr. Timmins picked up his heiress.

"It's the image of you," she said, regarding with some trepidation Mr. Timmins' method of handling the infant.

"I don't see how you can make that out," said Mr. Timmins gravely. "I don't know when my nose looked like a dab of putty. Do I understand you that my eyes bear any resemblance to the head of a screw?"

"I mean the general features," murmured Mrs. Timmins.

"The general features seem to be all mouth," retorted Mr. Timmins, examining his acquisition. "If our general features are all alike, my visage must remind you of an earthquake. Hi! kichee! kichee! What makes her fold up her legs like that?"

"She can't help it," reasoned Mrs. Timmins. "They'll straighten out in time."

"No time like the present," quoted Mr. Timmins; and he took his daughter's feet and commenced pulling her limbs. "I don't want any bandy-legged first in this family, while I'm at the head of it."

Naturally the baby began to cry, and Mr. Timmins essayed to soothe it.

"Hi! kichee! kichee! kich-ee-ee!" he chirruped. "Great Scott, what a cavern! Have you any idea how much this mouth weighs? Hi! kichee! kichee-e! You'll have to get that mouth roofed in before next winter. What's the matter with her?"

"Perhaps you hurt her. Let me take her, please," pleaded Mrs. Timmins.

"She's doing well enough. Hi, you! Hold up. Haven't you anything to catch this mouth in? It's spilling all over the neighbourhood. Hi! Topsy, Genevieve, Cleopatra! I'm going to have trouble breaking this young one's temper, I can see that. Here bend the other way at once!" and Mr. Timmins tried to straighten up his offspring without avail.

"Let her come to me, do, please," moaned Mrs. Timmins, and Mr. Timmins was forced to hand her over.

"Well, that's a fine baby," said he, nursing his knee and eyeing the infant. "What're those bumps over its eyes for? What preponderance of intelligence do they represent?"

"You mustn't talk so," remonstrated Mrs. Timmins. "She's the handsomest child you ever saw."

"Well, she's got to stop biting her nails before she's much older. Here, take your hands out of your mouth, can't you? Why don't she put her hands down?"

"Why, all babies do that," explained Mrs. Timmins. "You can't stop that."

"I'm going to try," said Mr. Timmins, "and I don't want to be interfered with in bringing this child up. Here, put your hands in your pockets! Don't you let me see any more nail biting, or you and I'll have an argument. She gets that from your family, Mrs. Timmins."

"I say, dear, don't you want to go and order some things?" asked Mrs. Timmins.

"No," rejoined her husband; "I want to see this youngster. Where's her chin? Do babies always have their upper jaw set right on their shoulders? Kichee, kichee! I don't believe she's quite right. Where's her forehead? Great Moses! Her head is all on the back part! That baby's got to be pressed. It's got no shape."

"Get away," exclaimed Mrs. Timmins indignantly. "She's a perfect angel. There's nothing in the world the matter with her."

"Of course you know," growled Mr. Timmins. "You don't want anything more than a hundred yards of grey holland, and an exceeded income to be an orphan asylum. If I had your faith and the measles, I'd make a living as a foundling's home! She'll be old enough to spank in a week, won't she?"

"No, she won't," said Mrs. Timmins. "She'll never be old enough for that."

"She will," grunted Mr. Timmins; "if she isn't, she'll get it before she matures up to that period. That's all. Let me take her. Here, let's have her."

But Mrs. Timmins flatly refused.

"Keep your baby, then!" roared Mr. Timmins. "If you know more about babies than I do, then keep her. The way you coddle her one would think she was a new paste for the complexion. Fit you up with a broken sofa and a grease spot, and you'd do for a nursery."

And Mr. Timmins started off to find his friend Speckwick, who congratulated him, and started off with him to assist him in the selection of some things for the household.

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THE DOCTOR'S DOG.

DR. PETER LAURVIG was a native of Norway resident in Naples, where he was well known. He had taken his degrees for the simple love of science, and he practised medicine as an amateur among the poor, without fees, for the love of humanity, it seemed. But for those who penetrated more deeply into his idiosyncrasies, this opinion was difficult to reconcile with the thorough misanthropy of the man.

Dr. Laurvig was rich, a widower, and the father of a daughter whom he adored. He had left his own country in order to warm up the blood of this sickly child in the sunshine of Italy. The consumptive girl, however, had surrendered to her disease, and died in Naples. Her father remained in the place where the world was emptied for him of every joy.

After a period of overwhelming dejection, he resumed his old studies and began again his researches as an herbalist. Every day he wandered in the country or on the beach; bent with passion over the wild flowers, and the weeds floating in the sea-wrack.

A man who picked up simples must know how to cure. The superstition of the humble folk never varies as to the solidity of this deduction. The poor of the Vomero on the slope of which he lived, besieged the foreigner who came among them, in order to obtain consultations or remedies, and wearied with importunity, he yielded to their clamour. Soon he even sought occasions to apply his medical knowledge.

When his good deeds were lauded Laurvig shrugged his shoulders with an incredulous smile. He had examined himself; he knew what stimulus stirred him in that struggle against death. Then he tasted the pleasure of a revenge—the intoxication of the duellist who fights his adversary with the very weapons by which he has himself been conquered. Each victory thrown back on the spoiler had the savour of a personal avenging.

A large Danish dog, a fine animal, answering to the name Rampollo, constituted the habitual society of Doctor Peter. The man with the closed heart had intimate companionship only with this creature; his bitter sorrow sometimes solaced itself in the unfathomed tenderness of those great black eyes, and smiles responded to their mute prayer; then those shining pupils sought humbly for a sign of affection on the face of the master, and the dog received a caressing pat.

Rampollo followed Laurvig in his visits to his patients, carrying on his neck the basket containing the medicines gathered in the fields by the herbalist. From Capodimonte to the wharves, all the *lazzaroni* knew the inseparable couple. When the black dog appeared, the physician's humble *clientèle*—cripples and fever-stricken alike—struggled to the windows to hail without ceremony "the good doctor."

Laurvig had led for several years this kind of life when, in 1884, the cholera broke out in Naples. The awful scourge had hardly declared its presence before it was raging in the pestilential older quarters of the city, that network of dark malodorous alleys, lined with the damp stalls of fishmongers and fish-friers, deprived of air and light by the high leprous houses fronting on the pavement, with dingy tatters hanging from every window.

They live in the street, in Naples; they may die there also. From the early morning these gloomy dwellings empty themselves of their unwashed occupants; this human swarm seems to push forward to meet such sinister visitors, and to await their poisonous breath on the sills of their own doors.

The natural and general depression had the effect of an excitant upon Doctor Peter. The robber that had crushed his heart, the enemy whom he followed from habit into its hidden ambuscades—Death—now offered him open battle. He could strike the monster at once with redoubled blows. He gloried in the conflict, and counted proudly the prey that he would snatch from the grim destroyer.

Laurvig scarcely seemed to rest. Unfailing energy arose from his hatred and bitterness against the all-powerful slayer, to whom his imagination sometimes lent a form—a chimerical reality—so much he wished to hold its throat in his grasp. Every morning the dawn found him at work in those miserable quarters, amid that plague-stricken population which implored his aid. He regained his lodgings only after a long day's fight in the streets against the terrible scourge.

One evening as he took the road to the Vomero, a man stood before him at the entrance of the Calata San Sebastiano—one of those narrow alleys bordered by decaying old buildings, where the worst classes lodge and sleep.

"Doctor, for the love of Heaven, come up to my rooms. A girl is dying there," pleaded the man.

Laurvig was very tired; the day had been a hard one, and he had fasted since the morning. His body demanded rest. The medicine basket shook about, absolutely

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empty, on Rampollo's neck. The doctor tried to pass on.

Resolutely the man barred his way. He appeared to be mad with his trouble; there was no affectation, as the gas-jet which shone upon him revealed. He was clad in tatters, with a sailor's red cap on his head, and feverishly turned a bony face toward Laurvig—a face browned by the sun, and shaded by a black beard. A glance of fright seemed to revolutionize its expression—the glance of a tiger-cat caught in a snare while marauding for prey.

"Doctor, you must come! It is my daughter. She will die, if you do not save her!"

The cry of the father awoke a sad echo in the heart of Laurvig. Without another word he followed the man, turned into a steep alley, and climbed a long dark staircase up to the attic into which his guide led him. By the light of an iron lamp which stood on one of the two chairs composing the chief furniture of the room, the doctor saw the sick girl—a beautiful creature of twenty years—huddled up in two short skirts, upon a mattress.

At the noise which they made in entering the wretched apartment, she pushed away the fragments of a red handkerchief knotted round her head and the long thick hair which had fallen over her face.

Her large black eyes alone seemed to be alive. Brilliant with a feverish sparkle, they wandered alternately, with a suppliant expression, from the Doctor to her father.

It was, indeed, the awful plague which had stolen into the life of that beautiful body. The skilled practitioner detected its presence at the first glance. He dispatched the father of Teresa to a druggist, ordering him to bring the needful revulsives, while he descended in haste to buy warm coverings of wool.

Never had he felt a more intense determination to baffle the enemy. He leant long over the young sufferer, the father crouching near him, mechanically watching his movements, while the weary physician practised on those cold limbs the violent reactions which possibly might recall them to life. He waited hours for signs of its return, and withdrew from his patient very late in the night, when the tranquility of the sick girl gave him hope.

An early hour the next day found Doctor Laurvig at the side of his patient. Deaf to the supplications of the miserable creatures who clamoured for his care, he fought two entire days for Teresa, against the inroad of the obstinate disease. The third day he was victor. Teresa was saved. His practised eye was certain of it, when he saw again the young life reassured in those great black eyes, in the supple movements of the beautiful limbs, and the carmine of a ripe pomegranate suffusing the lips while she tasted the food he had brought.

He left the grateful father, promising to return, and, as he turned the corner of Clata San Sebastiano, he whistled for his dog. As the animal did not appear, the Doctor mounted the stairs again, searched for him in the sick girl's garret, and afterwards questioned all the shopkeepers of the little street. Certainly, they knew Rampollo well; they had seen him that very morning; still, they could not give his master any news of him.

After vainly seeking him for an hour, the Norwegian took the road to his home, anxiously hoping that the dog might have gone there before him. But Rampollo was not to be found, and his master vainly looked for him all the day. In the evening he went to the police-station, related his story, and offered a large reward for the recovery of his faithful companion.

The chief of police had often met the Doctor in the populous flats which they frequented, for different purposes. He interested himself in the matter, and asked for circumstantial details.

Hardly had Laurvig finished his story, when the officer said:

"You have told me enough. Go to the house of Agostino Greco and leave something in his hand. This Agostino, the father of Teresa, is one of the worst of knaves. He is a porter on the quay; in his idle moments he lives by some trades that can be acknowledged, and by many that are usually kept secret. We have had our eye on him for a long time, and on his beautiful daughter, who is not much better than he.

"You have done them a great kindness, and they have stolen your dog; that is the order of things. He would steal anything. Do not seek elsewhere."

Laurvig mounted once more to the garret in the Calata San Sebastiano. By his glance and by his words he severely stirred the conscience of the old thief without too much disguising a suspicion, at which Agostino did not seem surprised. The Doctor went on with his talk, and then the man replied:

"Listen. You have saved my daughter. I would give my right hand to restore your dog. I will make it my business to find him. The policeman! Bah! With *him* you might search for the dog until the judgment day! As to myself, I know all the fellows that steal dogs. If they have already killed him, there is no remedy. But, if he is still alive and in Naples I will bring him to you before the end of the week, as sure as my name is what it is!"

Little convinced and less assured, Dr. Peter went back to his house, where he was now quite alone.

He forced himself, with difficulty, to leave it the following day to visit the sick. Death had taken his child; men had taken his friend; why disturb himself to succour the latter?

Saturday evening, as he sat musing at his window, throwing his small human trouble into the great sadness of the sea, a strident bark resounded on the road and set his heart beating. A few minutes later Rampollo bounded to the knees of his master with every demonstration of joy and tenderness that could be expressed by his tongue and the wagging of his tail. Behind the animal in the open door stood Agostino, twisting his red cap, with a smile of modest triumph.

"I told you that I would bring the dog back to you," he said. "Did the *police* find him? *I* found him. I know all dog-stealers!"

Recalled by that voice to his obligation of gratitude, Laurvig stopped caressing Rampollo. He went to his secretaire and took from a drawer several gold pieces and carried them to the man. Agostino drew back, and his face grew darker with an expression of displeased astonishment. As the Doctor's countenance indicated insistance, Agostino stopped him with a gesture of decision.

"No, none of that! You have saved my daughter; I have saved your dog. Everybody must have something to love; that is understood. We are even. Keep your money!"

Laurvig threw the money on the table, and returned to Greco with both hands cordially held out to him. "Pardon, and my thanks," he said. "Give me your hand."

"No, not that either. The hand of an honest man like you ought not to clasp the hand of a man like me! *Addio!*"

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He closed the door and disappeared. The next day an instinctive impulse carried Laurvig to the Calata San Sebastiano. Teresa was alone in the wretched garret. With a grave and pensive face, she coldly welcomed her benefactor.

"And your father—where is he?" inquired Laurvig.

"In prison," she answered. "They have just arrested him. A stab with his dagger, it appears."

The Doctor could not draw any further information from the poor girl. Obstinate in her silence, there was reproach in her glance. He repaired immediately to the police station, called for the chief, and questioned him regarding Agostino.

"Ah! that fellow!" replied that high functionary. "Yes, we have him at last! A good blow with his knife following a scuffle with one of his pals, the cobbler Girolamo, who follows, among other special pursuits, that of stealing dogs. As nearly as we can make it out by the lies of those knaves, they had stolen a fine animal belonging to you, I believe.

"Without doubt Agostino demanded his share. Girolamo refused to pay. Agostino tried to take off the dog by main force. In short, daggers were drawn, and the shoemaker has been accommodated by the hand of a master at the business. It will finish him up. By my faith! That was a good stab which delivered to us the wickeder of the two rogues, and rid us of the other."

Laurvig timidly advanced his version of the story. He succeeded only in making the chief smile, and understood that it would be useless to press the case. The officer had constructed the scene of the crime in his own imagination. Now, when a functionary has arranged the details of a crime according to his views, everybody knows that it is useless for meddlers to attempt modification.

The physician found his protest useless, and went away repeating to himself mechanically the phrase he had just heard—which was filled for him with a profound sense of tragic truth and cruel irony—a good stab!

He sought the magistrate, who told me this story. In the hope of throwing some light, he narrated the incidents after his own manner.

* * * * * *

"And what did you do with Agostino?" I demanded of my friend.

"What would you have had us do with him? We sent him to the galleys. Bless me! a dagger-thrust like that? And the beneficiary, the cobbler, is dead."

"Meanwhile, the justice of it," I began.

"Ah! there you are!" interrupted the magistrate. "If we listened to you, if justice split hairs, she would not cut off another head. Psychological analysis is one thing, my dear sir, and justice is quite another—a simple thing, mechanical, nothing more. Our clear Roman justice would trip at every step, if she embarrassed herself with sentimental subtleties.

"Besides, Laurvig was a strange character, and became more so after that adventure. He associated only with the rascals. One fine day he started for his own country with his dog and Teresa into the bargain. They say that he adopted her, and has married her to some *savant* at Bergen, and that he will leave her his fortune. Poor girl!

"But we intend to get a pardon for Agostino," the magistrate added in a lower tone.

"He deserves it! It was a good stab!"

JACK ROGERS.

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THE FINAL WAR

BY

LOUIS TRACY.

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CHAPTER XLVIII.

DR. JIM'S SECOND RAID.

DR. JAMESON had long since expiated the mad enterprise that ended so disastrously at Krugersdorp. He now commanded a fine body of South African horsemen, largely composed of the troopers who rode with him in the ill-fated Transvaal raid, and as the United States army was short of cavalry, "Dr. Jim's Regiment" was detailed for duty with General Smithson.

And these Afrikanders had a score to settle with the German Emperor. His unnecessary sympathy with the Boers, his unsought telegram condemning them, did not help to endear him to a gallant corps which, whatever the action of its leaders, at least tried to do that which it conceived to be its duty.

Dr. Jameson and his followers had entered upon the campaign with eagerness. Their daily hopes, their nightly dreams, centred upon the one object of their lives—they desired above all else to get even with the Kaiser.

And now, if this talk of approaching armistice were true, the chance was remote of balancing the account.

"He is only twenty miles away," growled Sir John Willoughby; "but he might as well be in China. Perhaps to-morrow we may be told off to act as his escort during a grand palaver."

"Perhaps to-night," said Dr. Jameson, who had been deep in thought for an hour after the transmission of the mysterious letter was noised abroad.

The other men in the mess tent were surprised at his serious tone, though they shared his keen annoyance at the threatened cessation of hostilities.

"To-night!" exclaimed Major Coventry. "Impossible. The letter, whatever it contains, cannot reach Her Majesty before eleven o'clock to-morrow, and it will take at least another hour to get to Lord Salisbury. Even a cable message will not enlighten the Duke until two p.m., at the earliest. That is what one of his staff told me just now."

"He was right," observed the Colonel, in his grave, preoccupied tone; "but Her Majesty and Lord Salisbury may be called upon to deal with a cable first."

None of the few officers present could longer doubt that their leader had some serious purpose behind his words.

Sir John Willoughby went to the door of the tent, walked round the outside to make sure there were no eavesdroppers and returned. Planting himself squarely before Dr. Jameson and said:

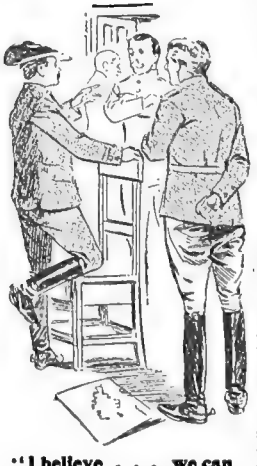
"Now, what it is?"

"It is this," was the reply. "I believe that by properly formulating our scheme and carrying it through regardless of personal consequences, we can capture him some time about 2.30 a.m."

Not a man needed enlightenment as to the individuality indicated by the personal pronoun. Comment was out of the question.

They simply waited for further explanation.

"The German officers who brought the letter," went on Dr. Jameson, "had some refreshment at the headquarters mess before they returned. They sat together unattended for a moment, and as I speak German well I could not help hearing their remarks to one another.



"I believe . . . we can capture him some time about 2.30 a.m."

"And this is the actual text of their conversation.

"The younger one said:

"'These English cannot conceal their astonishment.'

"The other answered:

"'Nor can the Emperor conceal his anxiety. He sleeps to-night at the headquarters of the 4th division, in the village of Westhausen, so as to be able to receive the reply at the earliest possible moment.' That is all."

"It's a lot," observed Sir John Willoughby thoughtfully.

"I don't see it," exclaimed a young captain, noted for his hard riding, his utter contempt of personal danger, and his thick head.

"No, old chap, I didn't think you would," said the Colonel with a quiet smile. "But you probably will see it before to-morrow morning."

The other men laughed, and Dr. Jameson continued:

"This is my plan. We select 300 of our hardest men and

best horses—men and animals up to forty miles with some hard knocks thrown in. I get permission from General Smithson—the Duke would refuse it—to conduct an extended reconnaissance, starting about eleven o'clock. Westhausen is exactly eighteen miles from here, and the country is practicable either by road or field. We walk the first ten miles, say 1.30 a.m.; we gallop the remaining eight, say 2.30; we stop for nothing; and when we reach Westhausen we surround the largest house where horses are picketed outside, and lights and orderlies knocking about show signs of an important occupant. We ourselves should carry the first explanation of the firing at the outposts. We enter the house, and if the Emperor is there, tie him on to a led horse and carry him off. If he is not there, well, we do the best we can. This time, gentlemen, there will be no dispatch-box.

"Always ante before the draw, boys," said a deep voice at the entrance. "If there's a strong game on deal me a hand," and Colonel Ritchie strode into the tent, looking quizzically at the startled group of conspirators, who were so engrossed in Dr. Jameson's words that they never heard the approach of the American cavalry leader. Much as they liked him they were annoyed at the interruption.

"A gentleman——" began Major Coventry angrily.

"A gentleman always knocks," laughed Ritchie, "but he can't if there ain't a door. You were all so interested that I thought someone was raising the crowd a hundred. But you're busy. Shall I quit?" and he turned to go.

"No, Colonel Ritchie," cried Dr. Jameson. "You shall stay. We can trust *you*, at any rate. If you decide against our proposal, promise that you will forget it."

"Shake!" said Ritchie, extending his hand. "But it will be a cold deal that leaves me out."

When he heard what was in the air he whooped in the most approved style of the Sioux nation.

"Great snakes!" he yelled. "I'd ride all the way on a circus horse. But my boys will lynch me when they hear I went without them."

"Select fifty whom you can trust absolutely, and we will reduce our contingent to make room for them. I can be sure of my men, but I am not so sure of so many horses, as that last dust-up with the Uhlans tired a lot of them."

Arrangements were now rapidly discussed, and the party broke up shortly afterwards, each officer having his clear and well-defined duties to perform. Above all else, every man taken on the expedition must thoroughly understand its desperate nature. Those who fell could not be cared for, those who were dismounted could not be carried, those who reached the goal must rigidly obey orders at all personal risk and sacrifice.

Not a man backed out who was asked to volunteer.

Colonel Ritchie was entrusted with the task of gaining General Smithson's permission for the "reconnaissance." The conversation between the two is worth reproducing.

"What's afoot?" said the United States Commander when the request was preferred.

"Well, General, it's this way," explained Colonel "Gu." "These Afrikander boys think they can ride a few. It's a fine night, with a weak imitation of a Californian moon, and perhaps we might find a stag grazing in the lowlands. It's a sort of deer hunt, with Uhlans in the background. Venison is in season just now, and our menu of roast beef, and boiled beef, and potted beef, and beef——"

"There. That will do," was the dry answer. "You're not lying so artistically as usual. If it wasn't for this confounded rumour of peace negotiations stopping all the fun I would not sanction this affair. You're up to mischief of some sort. When Jameson and you hunt together there's trouble brewing. But listen. Don't get yourself hurt."

With this grudging assent Ritchie thought it best to depart.

By some occult means the circle of conspiracy widened. Several officers in British regiments suddenly obtained a night's leave "on urgent private affairs," chargers were borrowed, when they happened to be well-known hunters, "just for the evening, old fellow," girths were carefully examined, surcingles scrutinised, stirrup-leathers tested, revolvers cleaned, swords sharpened, and huge suppers eaten.

Each officer and private carried a large supply of weak whisky and water—not for himself, but for his horse.

At eleven p.m. they mustered in two's and three's at a quiet rendezvous. They formed up rapidly in four troops, 320 of the finest cavalry soldiers that the world could produce, and mounted as no regiment of horse was ever mounted before.

There was no delay. "Fours right. Left wheel. Trot." Were the commands in rapid succession, and they left the precincts of the lines on the right wing occupied by the United States army.

Dr. Jameson, of course, was in command, with Sir John Willoughby as second, Colonel Ritchie and Major Coventry as squadron leaders, and the rest of the officers concerned in the Transvaal raid, assisted by a sprinkling of volunteers from British regiments, distributed among the four troops.

Once well beyond the outposts, and safe from interference, a halt was called.

Dr. Jameson briefly addressed his followers, fully and lucidly explaining his project, and finally calling upon anyone who did not care for the onerous personal conditions of the enterprise to turn back.

His speech was received with dead silence, for any combined testimony of approval was out of the question.

But somebody softly whistled the air, "We won't go home until morning," and there was a general snigger. Dr. Jameson himself joined in the laugh.

"I suppose I have been answered," he said. "Now, these are my final instructions. We walk for about nine miles. You can dismount and lead your horses, if you like, except the advance guard who will be relieved each half hour. You may smoke and talk quietly, but be momentarily on the alert for orders. I need hardly say that all orders must be instantly and absolutely obeyed."

Then the march commenced.

The way was easy to find, and a bright moon lit up the landscape for a considerable distance, so progress was rapid and uninterrupted.

At half-past one the force halted for five minutes for a general tightening up of girths and accoutrements. The muster roll was gone through and no one reported missing.

Then the whole party remounted and advanced, still at a walk, as they were only seven miles from Westhausen, the distance being somewhat less than Dr. Jameson had calculated from the map.

At six miles from the village they broke into a sharp trot; at five miles they were mistaken for scouting Uhlans, and allowed to reach the first outpost without being fired upon; at four miles they had a sharp tussle with a squadron of dragoons, whom they surprised in a small hamlet.

The pace then became a steady gallop, and they swept unimpeded through a brigade of infantry who wholly failed to realise the fact that a detachment of the enemy was riding through the shaded road that intersected their lines.

The church clock of Westhausen chimed the half-hour past two when the leading troop dashed into its only street, with its clusters of cottages and isolated residences of more pretentious character.

Right in the centre of the village stood a large house, usually occupied by the principal local landowner. In front and in the meadow at the rear were picketed over a hundred horses, and the moonbeams glinting from cuirass and helmet worn by several orderlies standing near the open door, revealed members of what was surely the Emperor's bodyguard.

"We've got him, by Jimini!" yelled Dr. Jameson, whose

self-contained calm had now vanished beneath the spell of ungovernable excitement. There was no need for instructions. Nothing had been forgotten beforehand. Whilst the first troop knocked down the practically unarmed soldiers on duty, half of the second troop dismounted and rushed towards the building, their comrades holding their horses. No. 3 troop busied themselves in cutting the halters and heelropes of the tethered animals, and smacked them with the flat of their sabres to start them off in wild career, and No. 4 passed on up the street for a hundred yards, to prevent any interruption from that side.

The sentry at the door shot and killed the first trooper who ran up the steps, but a second later he was run through the heart, and a score of men were in the building. Some diverged right and left, others raced upstairs, and they found the Emperor in the first-floor front room, standing in bewildered attitude as he had risen from the camp bed, where he had laid himself, fully dressed, to snatch a brief rest after the fatigues of the day.

There was a lamp burning on the table, and to his practised eye no second glance was needed to explain the turmoil in the street and the sudden entry of these brown-coated armed men into his chamber.

He sprang to his sword, but before he could reach it a dozen hands held him fast, and his arms were rapidly pinioned behind his back.

Startled and utterly amazed, pale with weariness and anxiety, he was yet true to the demands of his exalted rank.

"What is the meaning of this outrage?" he cried vehemently, speaking in English.

"It means, Your Majesty, that you are our prisoner, and you must accompany us this instant," said an officer.

"Yes, you've got ter quit, now, immediate," chimed in a San Franciscan who could not resist the temptation to bandy words with an Emperor.

"But the Duke of Connaught cannot have sanctioned these unwarrantable proceedings. I have but a few hours since written to the Queen——"

The Kaiser would have proceeded further, but the officer who had first spoken sternly broke in:

"Your Majesty, we have no time for argument. Will you walk or shall we carry you? You must decide at once."

"I will not, because I cannot, resist," was the reply, in tone of such quiet dignity that it almost unnerved the man he addressed. In happier years they had met at Cowes.

Forthwith the party reached the street, and the Emperor, without another word being spoken, was lifted on to the magnificent charger provided for him, two troopers rode close on each side, and an imperative command recalled the scattered members of the detachment.

So quickly and effectually had the capture been carried out, that even yet there was no semblance of resistance in the vicinity of Westhausen.

The Emperor was placed in the centre of the third troop, and the whole party started back towards Lauenburg at a gallop. Half a mile from Westhausen a road deflected to the left, and Dr. Jameson led his men by this way in order to avoid the brigade of infantry they had passed *en route*. It was well he did so. A staff-officer returning from headquarters had recognised the uniforms of the last troop as they clattered by, and had given the alarm, whilst the general in command, although unable to fathom the real purport of the raid, scented danger to his royal master.

Troops were already advancing towards Westhausen at the double, and as there were over 10,000 men in the brigade, it is probable that not only every man in the British contingent would have been shot, but the Kaiser himself might have fared ill at the hands of his own men owing to their ignorance of the circumstances of the case.

"Dr. Jim," and his troopers, with their illustrious prisoner, were nearly four miles from Westhausen before they found a road that turned directly towards the British lines. It passed through a dense wood for some distance, and unexpectedly opened out on to a stretch of common.

Barely had the leading files left the shadow of the trees before they perceived in the distance the bright helmets of some Prussian dragoons, and the British horsemen were discovered at the same time.

The field telegraph, which was carried to high perfection in the German army, had warned the commander to be on the look-out for the party, whose numbers were correctly estimated, and he was now able to throw in their path nearly 600 stalwart Westphalians, well mounted, and eager to teach these marauders a lesson.

Neither he nor his men dreamt for a moment that the Kaiser was in the midst of the enemy.

The pace at which Dr. Jameson's squadrons travelled, the manner of their formation at the moment, the surprise of the *rencontre*, all contributed to confuse the issues of the cavalry combat that forthwith ensued.

One fact stood out boldly on behalf of the British. They knew the prize they had at stake.

This was no ordinary midnight scuffle between opposing vedettes. Outnumbered two to one by the Germans, each man who had followed Dr. Jameson in this memorable ride was ready to face singlehanded any odds that offered, and prepared to throw his life in the scale if that would suffice to turn the balance in favour of his comrades.

One order and one only was given.

"Cut your way through!" shouted the Colonel, and wedding example to precept, he clapped spurs to his horse to urge him along at top speed, and rode straight at the nearest batch of dragoons.

With a wild yell his men followed him, and, by sheer intuition, those in the rear knew what was going on in front.

In no wise unwilling for the game, the Germans were nevertheless unable to get their horses in rapid motion before the leading Britons were upon them, and the first batch of Westphalians disappeared as though they had been struck by lightning.

But the tremendous phalanx of men and horses behind, by its sheer density, soon rendered further progress impossible.

This consideration told both ways.

If it hindered the Englishmen, it also enabled more of them to reach the scene of conflict, and for a couple of minutes there was the heartiest give-and-take *mêlée* that the eyes of a soldier could wish to see.

The Emperor, secure in the midst of the third troop, which had been halted by Colonel Ritchie, watched the mad scene, with its fierce energy heightened by the uncertain light of the waning moon, with its hoarse cries of rage and keener notes of agony, the neighing and screaming of wounded horses, the clash of sword against sword or helmet, and he raged at the impotence of his position.

"Cut your way through!" shouted the Colonel.

He would have bartered his kingdom at that moment to be free and at the head of his gallant troops.

Dr. Jameson, bareheaded and breathless, blinded with blood from a cut across the forehead, suddenly heard Ritchie's voice, quite close to him, shouting some orders.

"Is he safe?" cried the Colonel.

"Yes," was the answer, "and by thunder he's going slick through, now."

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Jameson managed to clear his eyes and after a moment's consultation he rode again into the press of the fight. He is endowed by nature with a high penetrating voice and he now put all his force into a final command:

"Leading squadron. Outwards—wheel!"

Some of the men heard him, others did not, but those who understood repeated the order. Its object was quickly made apparent.

No. 4 Troop, composed entirely of Americans, now rode forward in half-sections, every man with his sword returned, and a six-chambered revolver in each hand.

Forcing their chargers with knee and spur, firing point blank into the mass of the Westphalian cavalry, and practically making every shot to tell upon a horse or a man, the United States soldiers succeeded, as with no other arm they could have succeeded, in clearing a path for themselves.

Followed closely by the Emperor's escort they smashed their way through to the farther side of the common, and Major Coventry's squadron, now sadly diminished in numbers, faced round to stop pursuit.

This part of their task was not a difficult one.

Nearly one-third of the Germans had fallen, and there were few among the survivors who did not bear upon their persons some marks of the contest.

"I am Dr. Jameson."

The Emperor during this dramatic scene, had not uttered a word. He disdained even to cry for help as he was hurried through the press of his own troops, and he rode quietly forwards for nearly an hour after all danger of immediate pursuit had passed without exhibiting any sign of the burning thoughts that possessed his soul.

At a midway farmhouse a brief halt took place, and the Emperor's arms were unbound.

He was offered some slight refreshment, which he pleasantly accepted. Then he said, with a smile, to the officer who had arrested him, and who never left his side for a moment.

"That was a good fight!"

"Superb, Your Majesty."

"You were better mounted than my men. How many do you number?"

"All told, 320, Your Majesty."

"Ah. And you cut your way through twice as many of my best soldiers. No wonder you dare to face the world in arms. What casualties have you sustained?"

"I fear, your Majesty, that we have left 130 men on the field. That is a rough estimate made *en route*."

The Emperor sighed deeply. "It is a terrible price. And my own brave fellows, too. Even more of them, by necessity. Believe me, Captain, I am not worth it."

At 5.15 a.m., as the first notes of the *reveille* pealed forth in the grateful morning air, the gallant band, now so woefully diminished in numbers, rode into the British lines. The Emperor was at once taken to a spacious tent and invited to enter. He was followed by a slightly-built but active-looking man, whose forehead was roughly bandaged, and who was haggard from loss of blood, want of sleep, and extreme physical exhaustion. He stood for a moment looking at the Emperor.

"I am now going, your Majesty," he said quietly, "to announce your arrival to the Duke of Connaught. Meanwhile I have taken every precaution to secure your comfort, and can only express my regret if the rude necessities of the night were unduly irksome. Here, however, you will find every convenience," and, with a comprehensive sweep of his hand, the newcomer indicated the surroundings.

The Emperor followed his gesture, and the eyes of both men fell at the same instant upon a number of telegraph forms, ostentatiously displayed on a camp writing-table.

Then the Kaiser spoke. "May I ask," he said, "to whom I owe my capture and these—these delicate attentions?"

"Your Majesty, I am Dr. Jameson."

* * * * * *

At nine o'clock that morning mounted orderlies from the War Office galloped furiously through the streets of London with imperative summonses to the members of the Council of National Defence.

At ten they were gathered in Lord Salisbury's room at the Foreign Office, and the sensational telegram from the Duke of Connaught was read. His announcement was received with silent amazement. Sir William Harcourt, bending forward with his hand over his ear that not a word might escape him, was the first to speak. "A most interesting example of historic irony," he said, nodding gravely.

"Telegrams figure largely in the life of the German Emperor," observed Lord Wolseley.

"The incident renders an already complex position more difficult." It was Lord Salisbury who uttered these words.

The Council were deeply engaged in discussing this unexpected development when a secretary entered with a special letter from Her Majesty. He handed it to the Prime Minister, who slowly read the autograph document within, and then, with equal deliberation, examined an inclosure. It was the Kaiser's letter to the Queen.

In simple phrase it requested that a direct representative of Her Majesty might be sent to Germany to arrange the terms of an honourable peace, and thus bring to an end a needless conflict fraught with disaster to both nations.

For a little while consideration of the dispatch was impossible. Each turned to his neighbour to eagerly express his astonishment and delight. But at last collective deliberation was resumed.

"Gentlemen," said Lord Salisbury, "before proceeding to discuss the conditions of peace, it is important that we should decide upon the person to perform this onerous mission. I am convinced that we shall best serve the interests of England, and at the same time meet the wishes of the Emperor, if we ask H.R.H the Prince of Wales to undertake it."

All eyes instinctively turned in one direction.

"Gentlemen," said the Prince, rising from his chair, "if this be your pleasure, I am ready."

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE PRINCE AND THE EMPEROR.

ON the afternoon of the day on which the Council of National Defence met in London, an important telegram was handed to the English Commander-in-Chief at Lauenburg. When he had read it, he summoned General Sir Richard Sheridan and gave him a few brief instructions.

"I am ordered," he said, "to set the German Emperor at liberty without delay. It is a duty which delicacy forbids my performing in person. I shall be glad, therefore, if you will proceed at once to his Majesty and inform him of the decision arrived at in London. You will provide an escort of cavalry and see that he is conveyed, with as little observation as possible, to the German lines. You will also inform him that his letter has duly reached Her Majesty, and that the Council of National Defence has agreed to a proposal of Lord Salisbury that the Prince of Wales shall proceed to Germany and meet the Emperor to discuss the

terms of an armistice. His Royal Highness will arrive here to-morrow and will at once communicate with him as to the place and conditions of *rencontre*. I leave it to your good sense to do all that courtesy and discretion suggest."

Sir Richard concealed what emotion he might have felt at this news, and selecting a guard of honour, proceeded to the Emperor's tent.

The Kaiser had sufficiently recovered his good-humour. He was a soldier born, who knew how to submit to the strange reverses of battle, and he listened to the communication made to him with grave respect.

"I beg you to thank the Duke," he said in reply, "for the consideration he has shown me. I trust that German soldiers will never show themselves less lacking in such honourable courtesies of war."

Sir Richard restrained a smile. He was Saxon enough to scout the possibility that the German or any other Emperor could ever be in such a position as to enable him to exhibit courtesy of this kind to an English General.

With all becoming marks of respect, he formed up his guard of honour and rode off with his illustrious charge. Early the following morning the German army received back its wandering chief, almost before it had missed him, and Prince von Hohenlohe was so profoundly relieved that he did not during the whole day make a single reference to the military genius of his old friend, Von Moltke. The Kaiser found no difficulty, on his part, in controlling his exuberance of spirits or the undue emphasis of his opinions. He only once openly referred to the incident.

"The British," he remarked to the Prince, "say little about their colonial empire. But their object lessons are admirable. I do not wonder that they have seized the earth if they breed such amateurs as Dr. Jameson."

The old statesman grunted and took a long pull at his beaker of Munich beer. He proffered no reply, but he muttered to himself:

"*Their* amateurs found empires; *ours* do their best to lose them!"

Luckily the Kaiser did not hear him, and the Prince, much relieved by his aside, filled his pipe once more and smoked on with great content.

Towards nightfall some excitement towards the rear of the British camp announced that something unusual was happening. It was noticed, too, that the Duke of Connaught with his whole staff had stationed himself at the temporary depôt which marked the terminus of the military station. Through the army there rushed the welcome news that the heir to the throne had already arrived. That ever popular favourite, the Prince of Wales, was now in the midst of the troops who worshipped him so well.

A salute greeted him as he stepped from the carriage, in the uniform of a Field Marshal, and grasped the hand of his brother. Then, forgetting restraints of discipline as they recognised the well-known face, a mad shout went up from ten thousand throats. In such wise the British Tommy broke in to add his own spontaneous welcome and cheer Old England in the person of her Prince.

The latter saluted in response. And then his brother, placing his hand upon the arm of General Smithson, said:

"Permit me, before anything else is done, to present to you a brave officer and a skilled commander to whom I owe many debts of gratitude, and with me all Englishmen."

"General," observed the Prince, extending his hand, and not without a smile, "is it consistent with your republican principles to bestow a welcome upon a grateful ally?"

"Believe me, sir," replied the impetuous Smithson with fervour, "if we saw much of you on the other side, we should all turn royalists to a man!"

His Royal Highness made a laughing retort, and the three rode off to headquarters.

(To be continued.)

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Mr. JAMES MITCHELL, 2 Belfield Terrace, Musselburgh,

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YOUR ESTEEMED INQUIRY DULY TO HAND.

P. F.—The best county in England for cycling from an all round point of view is Lincolnshire. The roads are admirably suited to cycling, the scenery is often very beautiful, and there are scores of places of great historic interest.

H. G.—No bird of prey has the gift of song.

OLD STAGER would like to know if I can tell him which feature of the face shows signs of age least.————The nose. Bone and cartilage enter so largely into its construction and determine its characteristics, that it undergoes little perceptible change, as a rule, with the lapse of years. Next to the nose, probably the ears, as a rule, show the fewest and least obvious signs of old age.

W. L. D. asks: "Why do some people stick out the little finger when holding light articles?"————If you will observe closely you will find that it is people generally with short little fingers who do this. Those with such fingers rarely use them except when they grasp with the hand as a whole. In handling an article such as a teacup there seem always to be attempts at balancing the hand by aid of the little finger, in the same way as a fencer balances the rest of his body with his disengaged arm, and at the same time it is kept out of harm's way.

G. M.—There is a very important vestige of the toll system still existing in "the thorough toll" at Newcastle-on-Tyne. The importance of this toll is shown by the fact that it brings in more than £5,000 a year. This also shows what an inconvenience it must be, and the tradesmen of the city are agitating for its abolition. The toll dates from the reign of Henry II., who granted a charter for it, and it has since been confirmed by Act of Parliament.

J. G. J.—Many of the cast-off uniforms of our soldiers are exported to Africa for trading purposes amongst the Kaffirs.

BLACK would like to know where coal is cheapest and where it costs most. This is to settle a friendly dispute. ————It is dearest in South Africa, while in China it is cheaper than in any other country in the world. But the march of civilisation and progress is bringing about a change in both places. The supply is increasing in South Africa, thus reducing the price, while in China the coal mines are getting into the hands of Europeans, who are not content with the small profits made by the Chinese out of their hidden stores of fuel.

LAURA writes to ask if there are any species of flowers which give out light.————Several. Nearly every one is familiar with the glow which is given out in the dark by various kinds of fungi. The ordinary nasturtium is another example of this peculiar irregularity, while the common marigold has been seen to glow brilliantly, the light seeming to play over the petals with quick changes. The best time for observing this phenomenon is on a night succeeding a sunny day, for there is no light after rain. The light increases in intensity during July and August.

H. D.—The healthiest spot in the world appears to be a little French village named Aumone. There are only forty inhabitants, twenty-three of whom are over eighty, and one is a centenarian.

O. S.—It is difficult to say exactly how many people in England ride bicycles. I believe the number to be something like a million and a half, at the least.

H. M.—The "terrier" which has puzzled you is the name given to a document that is, or is supposed to be, kept at every church. This document contains particulars of the income of the benefice, especially of glebe lands, which gives rise to the name of "terrier" — from the Latin word "terra."

"WHY is it," asks L. E., "that we never hear of members hissing when they disapprove of certain points in a fellow member's speech in Parliament?"————There is a rule of the House against it. That rule dates as far back as 1604, and is to the effect that whoever hisses or disturbs a man in his speech shall answer for it at the Bar as a breach of order and contempt of the House. This has put a stop to hissing, but there are many notable instances of members being "disturbed in their speech" by other means hardly less objectionable.

K.G.—The ribbon of the Garter is not generally conferred upon peers of lower dignity than earls. The only commoner upon whom the decoration has been bestowed was Sir Robert Walpole, who was Prime Minister during part of the first half of last century.

CYCLIST.—The largest cycling school in the world is probably the "Palais Sport" in Paris. The course is 1,000 yards long. A spiral pathway rises from the main floor to the roof, and is divided into two paths, for ascending and descending. Each pathway is inclosed on both sides by a high screen, which is painted to represent rural scenery.

CRICKET.—The distance between the wickets has never varied since the earliest records of the game; it has always been twenty-two yards.

H. L.—Certainly, if the umpire of a football or cricket match finds he has made a palpably wrong decision, he is at liberty to alter it.

C. T.—There are three hundred and thirty-four deer parks in England.

GERALD.—I know a good deal about bicycles and bicycle tyres, for I have been a keen rider for the past ten years. The tyre you mention is a second grade one. Dunlop's are unquestionably the most trustworthy for your purpose. You are mistaken in believing it is necessary to pump a Dunlop tyre to any particular degree of hardness to suit the state of the road. If you only partly inflate it, the tendency for the tyres to slip on greasy roads is very great, besides which they are liable to puncture and wear out more quickly. The tyres should be pumped so hard that when the rider is on the saddle it should not be depressed at all. Therefore, the amount of pumping depends entirely upon the weight of the rider. You can get a lot of information of this sort from a nicely got-up little pamphlet sent free by the Dunlop people from 14 Regent Street, W.C.

A.—On the average 111 platelayers are killed every year on the railways of the United Kingdom.

R. G. H.—Egypt is the only country in the world where there are more men than women. The male sex in the dominion of the Khedive exceeds the female by 160,000.

R. M. H.—It would be impossible for you to obtain a directory of St. Petersburg, for there is not such a thing in existence.

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